

THE BOOK *of* GALLANT VAGABONDS

HENRY BESTON



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The BOOK of GALLANT VAGABONDS

HENRY BESTON



SHIP BONETTA SALEM DEPARTING FROM LEGHORN

Courtesy Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.

THE HARBOR OF LEGHORN IN SHELLEY'S DAY SHOWING THE AMERICAN SHIP "BONETTA" OF
SALEM LEAVING PORT.

The BOOK of
GALLANT VAGABONDS

By
HENRY BESTON

ILLUSTRATED



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THE BOOK OF GALLANT VAGABONDS
—A—
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To
COLONEL THEODORE ROOSEVELT
and
MRS. THEODORE ROOSEVELT

IN GRATEFUL APPRECIATION OF
MANY YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP
AND ENCOURAGEMENT

FOREWORD

“The wide seas and the mountains called to him,
And grey dawn saw his camp-fires in the rain.”

There are times when everyone wants to be a vagabond, and go down the road to adventure, strange peoples, the mountains, and the sea. The bonds of convention, however, are many and strong, and only a few ever break them and go.

In this book I have gathered together the strange and romantic lives of actual wanderers who did what so many have wished to do; here are some who gave up all to go and see the world. The booming of temple gongs over the rice fields sounded in their ears, they tasted strange food cooked on charcoal fires in the twilight quiet of midocean isles, they knew the mountain wind keen with the smell of snow, the mystery of roads along great rivers, and the broad path of ships on lonely seas. Whatever was to be seen, they went to see; they did things the world thought could not be done.

Life is a kind of book which is put into our hands with many pages still uncut; some are content with the open leaves, others cut a few pages, the vagabond reads the whole book if he can.

I have called these wanderers “Gallant Vagabonds” to separate them from both the professional travellers and the vagabond ne’er-do-wells. The gallant vagabond is not the man with the sun helmet and the file of native bearers; nor is he the wastrel who drifts down-stream and sees the world as he goes; the real prince of vagabonds is the wayfarer with scarce a penny in his pocket who fights his way upstream to see where the river rises, and crosses the dark mountains to find the fabled town. His curiosity is never purely geographical, it lies in the whole fantastic mystery of life.

The true gallant vagabond is one of the heroes of humanity, and history owes him many of her great discoveries, many of her most spirited and romantic episodes.

Here you will find, gathered in their own vagabond company, John Ledyard the runaway college sophomore who thought of walking round the world, Belzoni the monk who became an acrobat and then an archæologist, Edward John Trelawny, the deserter, pirate, and country gentleman who came so mysteriously into the life of Shelley; Thomas Morton, the jovial Elizabethan who scandalized the New England Puritans with a Mayday revel, Arthur Rimbaud the poet who became an African trader, and James Bruce the sturdy Scot who rose to be a great lord in Abyssinia. The accounts are authentic, and if they seem like fiction, the reader must call to mind the old adage about the strangeness of the truth.

I wish to thank Mr. John Farrar, Editor of *The Bookman*, for the kindest of help and encouragement, and I welcome this same opportunity to thank Mr. Warren Butler of Salem, Massachusetts, who found me the old print of the ship *Bonetta*.

H. B.

New York City.

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***One:* JOHN LEDYARD**

One: JOHN LEDYARD

I

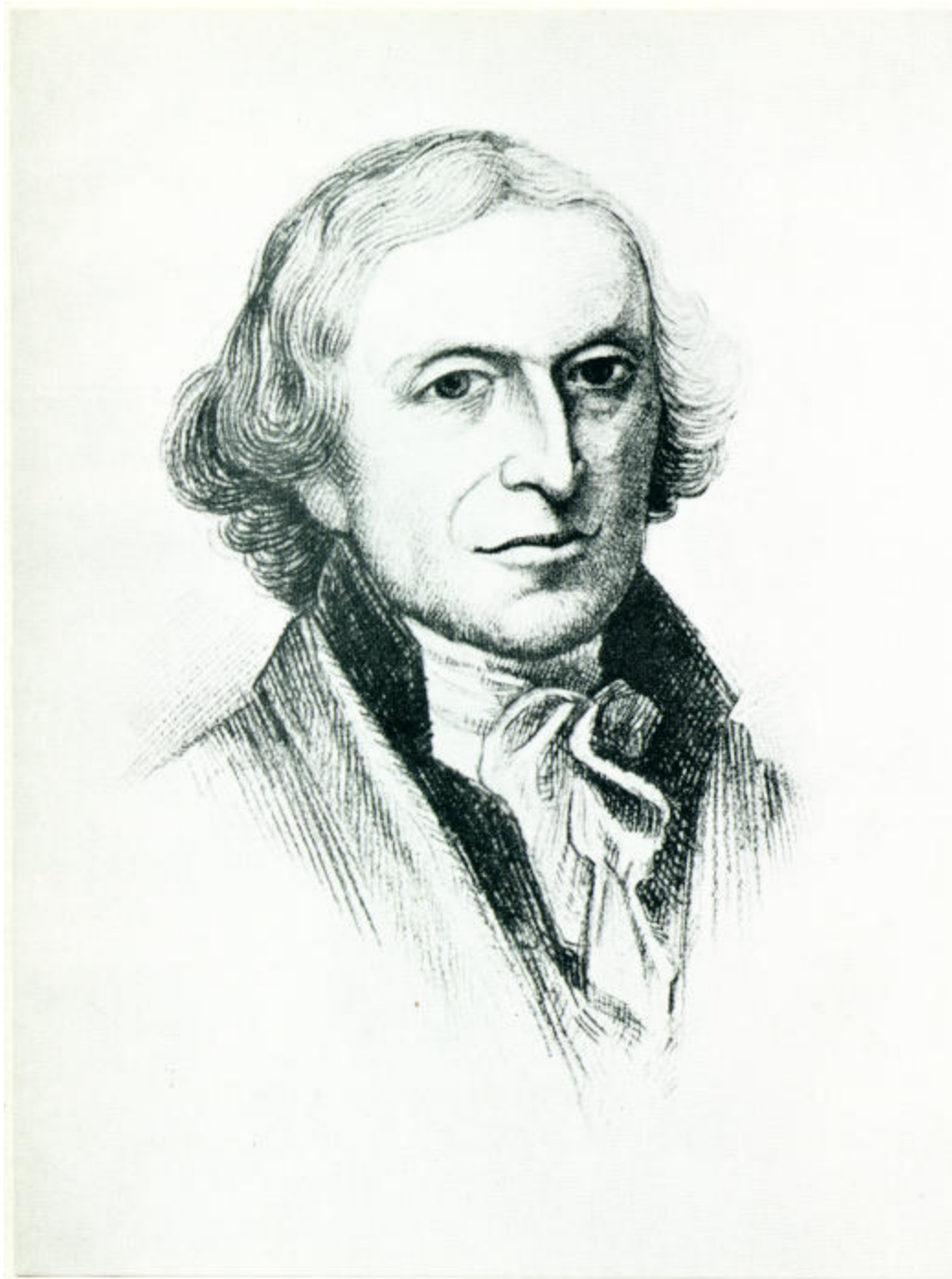
Here was a man who was born with two great gifts, one the most precious in the world, the other the most perilous. The first was an abounding physical vitality which made the casual business of being alive a divine adventure, the second, an imagination of the sort which refuses discipline and runs away with the whole mind.

The adventure begins in the spring of the year 1772 with the farmers of the Connecticut Valley halting their ploughs in the furrow, and straightening up to stare at a certain extraordinary vehicle going north on the river road. This vehicle was nothing less than a two-wheeled sulky, then a rig almost unheard of outside the towns, and one never known to be used by travellers. A sulky with bundle baggage lashed behind, surely the driver must be an odd kind of rogue! Stopping at nightfall at a farm, the stranger met with close scrutiny by rural candle light. He was a fair-haired youth an inch or so under six feet tall, and of that “rangy” and powerful build which is as characteristic of American soil as Indian corn. His eyes, which were well spaced in a wide forehead, were grey-blue in color, he had a good chin to face the world with, and something of a lean and eagle-ish nose. His name, he said, was John Ledyard, and he was on his way to become a missionary to the Indians.

This youth, John Ledyard, third of his name, had seen the light of day in the village of Groton, Connecticut; his father, a sea captain, had died young; legal mischance or a descent of harpy relatives had deprived the young mother of her property, and John had been brought up in the house of his grandfather at Hartford. Then had come years at grammar school, the death of his grandfather, his virtual adoption by an uncle and aunt, and the attempt of these good folk to make a lawyer of him, which experiment had not been a success.

At twenty-one years of age, John presented something of a problem to his kinsmen. What was to be done with this great fair-haired youth who had

neither money nor influential friends? Suddenly Destiny came down the Connecticut Valley with a letter.



JOHN LEDYARD

Courtesy Judge John A. Aiken.

The Reverend Eleazar Wheelock, founder of Dartmouth, wrote to John inviting him to the college. The passion of this good man's life was the evangelization of the dispossessed and incorrigible redskins; he visited them in their forlorn and dwindling encampments; he took their young men to be his pupils, and he had founded his college largely for the sake of training the sons of colonists to be Indian missionaries. Good Doctor Wheelock had been a friend of grandfather Ledyard's, and something or other had recalled to his mind the fair-haired boy who he had seen playing about the old man's house at Hartford. He would make a missionary of the lad, and send him forth to comfort the copper-skinned of the elect. A letter arrived offering John the status of a free pupil destined to the Indian field. Sulky and ancient nag were presently produced from somewhere, perhaps from John's own pocket, for he had just inherited a tiny legacy; the uncle and aunt waved farewell, a whip cracked in the air, and John and his sulky vanished over the hills and far away.

At Dartmouth College, he liked to act in plays, and clad in robes of Yankee calico, strutted about as the Numidian Prince, Syphax, in Mr. Addison's "Tragedy of Cato." A savour of old-fashioned rhetoric and magniloquence made its way from these plays into John's mind, and coloured his letters and his language all his life. He liked the out-of-doors, and on one occasion induced a group of comrades to climb with him to the top of a neighboring height, and spend the night on evergreen boughs strewn on the floor of deep holes dug in the snow. Doctor Wheelock nodded an enthusiastic consent; he saw in John's adventure fine training in hardship for his future missionaries! Letters of classmates paint Ledyard as restless, impatient of the dry bones of discipline, authoritative on occasion, and more a man with devoted cronies than one largely and carelessly popular. All other Dartmouth memories have faded in the epic glow of the adventurer's flight from his Alma Mater.

He came to college in a sulky, he left it an even more adventurous way. In the spring of 1773, the sound of the axe rings in the Dartmouth woods. Presently comes a shout, a great, crackling crash, and the sound and tremor of a heavy blow upon the earth. John Ledyard and his cronies have just felled a giant pine standing close by the bank of the Connecticut River. From this log, the homespun undergraduates fashion a dug-out canoe, fifty feet long and three feet wide, a veritable barge of a canoe, and once the

digging and hacking is done with, John himself weaves at the stern of the craft a kind of shelter-bower of willow wands. Word passes among the lads to be at the river early in the morning.

The spring in northern New England is no gracious and gradual awakening, it is shy, even timid, of approach, and there are times when the new leaves and petals have quite the air of children who have run out of the house on a winter's day. Then comes a sudden night of warmth and southwest wind, smells of wet earth and the sound of flooded streams fill all the dark, a rushing spirit of fertility shakes the land, and the rising sun reveals a world hurrying on to June. A dangerous spring in a Puritan land, for flesh and spirit are taken unawares, and swept off to the shrines of gods who have never made a covenant with man.

Such a spring it was, as the forest undergraduates gathered at the huge dug-out under the slanting light of early day, and watched their friend carry supplies to his canoe. John first put aboard a provender of dried venison and cornmeal, then a huge bearskin for a coverlet, and last of all two strangely assorted books, a Greek New Testament and the poems of Ovid. The truant Yankee sophomore steps into his canoe. A long halloo, a push all together, and the craft has slid off into the river, which, clear of ice and swollen by a thousand mountain streams, is rushing past their little college and on into the world. The current seizes the canoe; the wet paddle blade flashes in the cool sun; John masters the swirl with his strength and woodsman skill, and the future vagabond disappears on the way to his fantastic destiny. Little does the truant know that in January and February, 1787, a forlorn, penniless but indomitable traveller will accomplish one of the most amazing feats ever performed by mortal man, a fifteen hundred mile trudge through an unknown country deep in arctic snow and cold, and that the vagabond will be John Ledyard.

The mystery of his truancy remains to puzzle the world. For after all, why had he run away? In abandoning Dartmouth, he had locked behind him the one door to an education which had opened to him in his obscurity. John Ledyard's contemporaries said simply that the spring was racing in his blood, and that the born vagabond had been unable to control a vagabond urge. There is a world of truth in the reply, but not quite all the truth. The present day, with greater historical perspective, will have it that this fair-haired lad was not really a scion of the seaboard generations of transplanted

Englishmen, but a son of the new, native-born, and native-minded culture which was springing up in the hearts of Americans during the last half of the eighteenth century. This lad is no spiritual kinsman of harsh and merciless Endecott; his place is with Daniel Boone and the lords of the frontier. But at Dartmouth, the seventeenth century sat in the seat of power, for, intellectually, Wheelock was a contemporary of Cotton Mather; the two dominies would have talked the same Canaanitish jargon, and shared an identical attitude to life. But young John was of different stuff, and, moreover, he was in certain ways, curiously modern. His flight from Dartmouth thus becomes a bit of vagabondage hiding an instinctive recoil, for had he accepted a missionary career, the seventeenth century would have claimed him forever for its own.

Down the Connecticut River floats the log canoe, carrying a young New Englander from theology under Oliver Cromwell to adventure under George the Third.

II

Now came difficulties and explanations, and John cut the knot by going to sea. Four years later, at the end of a voyage, a young American seaman walks the narrow streets of London's "Sailortown." John Ledyard is now twenty-five years old, life has done little with him, and he has done little with life; his friends at home are beginning to regard him as something of a ne'er-do-well, and the pockets of his sailor breeches are emptier than ever.

In "Sailortown" an April sun is shining, the dank smell of the Thames mingles with wood smoke from the hearths, and there is a sound of men's voices and a clink of glasses at the doors of mariner's inns. John steps into a tavern, and hears news which fires his imagination, and sets his blood to racing. Captain James Cook, the great navigator and explorer, is about to make a third voyage to the South Seas, and ships are being prepared and loaded for the expedition. With characteristic audacity, John hurries directly to the Captain at his lodgings in Chelsea Hospital, and boldly requests to be allowed to go. His colonial directness pleases, and John Ledyard walks back to London, no longer an obscure American seaman, but a corporal of His Majesty's Marines attached to Cook's own vessel, the *Discovery*.

The two ships of the expedition, the old *Resolution* and the new *Discovery*, sailed from England on July 12th, 1776, bound for the South Pacific by the Cape of Good Hope.

He was a marine, now, on a British naval vessel; a roving Yankee caught up in the old navy's conventionalised routine. A bugle or a drum tattoo woke him at early dawn as he slept in the low 'tween deck caves where the timbers groaned when the wind freshened in the night, and the lanterns and the hammocks swung to the listing of the ship; he escaped from the darkness below, the warm, human smell, and the sight of sleepy men and nakedness to the humid deck, the lilac morning, and the vast splendour of the awakening sea; the drill drum beat for him, he heard the shuffle and the tramp of feet, the peremptory order, and, in the silences, the wind in the rigging and the endless, dissolving whisper of alongside foam.

This *Discovery* was the more interesting of the ships. Captain Cook himself was aboard, a man over six feet in height, with brown eyes, a pleasant countenance, and brown hair tied behind. Ledyard often saw the tall figure in great cloak and three-cornered hat standing at the other end of the deck. Perhaps of even greater interest to the ship's company was the Noah's ark farmyard aboard of cattle, sheep, goats, ducks, dogs, horses, cats, pigs, and rabbits, all intended as gifts to estimable savages who had no such allies, for the eighteenth century was nothing if not benevolent. When in port for any length of time, the sea-going bull and the other grazing animals were put ashore for pasturage; at the Cape of Good Hope, a rascally Hottentot delayed the expedition by stealing a salty and intrepid cow. During a stay in the east, this animal world was strengthened by a vast contingent of cockroaches who fell in showers to the deck when the sails were unfurled before getting under way; not a romantic picture, this, but one with a genuine flavor of old sailing ship days. And when all other things wearied, there was a battle to watch, that battle with never a truce which is the sailing of a sailing ship in open sea.

After a pause by the barren rocks of Kerguelen Land in the Antarctic, and after revisiting Tasmania and New Zealand, the expedition sounded its way through the archipelagos of the South Pacific, and anchored in the bay of Tongataboo in the Friendly Islands. The ships remained there twenty-six days gathering stores.

Tongataboo—the name has a ring of the Bab Ballads; but it hides the memory of a Paradise. John found himself among a people who were beautiful, courteous, and friendly, for no whites had yet poisoned them either with their maladies or their civilization, and there was no tiresome angel with a flaming sword. First of a line of roaring Yankee whalers and sailors, Corporal John walks the island night under the giant moon, watching the smooth, incoming seas burst and scatter into a churning wash that might be a liquid and greener moonlight; first of American adventurers in the South Seas, John Ledyard hears the endless clatter and dry rustling of the island palms. He lives in a tent ashore, refers to the natives as “the Indians,” eats fish baked in plantain leaves, and drinks water from a coconut shell. Late in the golden night, he hears over the faint monotone of the breaking sea, “a number of flutes, beginning almost at the same time, burst from every quarter of the surrounding grove.” Not to be outdone in the matter of entertainment, Cook delights the innocent natives with a display of fireworks, a form of entertainment then regarded as the height of the ingenious and the civilized. Surely it was pleasant to be alive when Paradise was young. From the Friendly Islands, the *Discovery* carried John to Hawaii, and thence to the coast whose memory was to shape the greater adventures of his life.

By the last half of the eighteenth century, the one accessible coast of North America which lingered unvisited and unexplored, was the coast of the Pacific North Northwest,—or to be more definite, the shores of northern British Columbia and the great peninsula of Alaska. The geographers of the day were aware that Bering had sighted such a coast, and that the Russians had crossed to it from northeastern Siberia and claimed it for their empire, but with these two facts their knowledge came to an end. The character and the conformation of the land remained unknown. Cook was to be the first to make a scientific survey of the region, for the Admiralty had instructed him to explore any rivers or inlets that might lead eastward to Hudson’s or Baffin’s bay through the “Northwest Passage” of romance. The ships turned north in December, 1777, and arrived off the coast of what is now the state of Oregon on March 7th, 1778. The weather was cold and stormy, but summer came upon them as they worked their way to the north, the splendid summer of the cool, northwestern land.

John Ledyard was once more on American soil, and what an America it was, this great unknown land of bold, indented coasts, evergreens and alders, snow-capped inland mountains, and great rivers moving unsullied to the sea! The beauty and living quality of the new country conquered the Connecticut explorer even as it conquered those who followed him. Carefully charting the way, Cook's expedition sailed along the coast to Alaska, past the towering cliffs of vast glaciers rising pale-green from the darker surges washing at their base; into this great fjord and into that went the ships, waking the deep arctic silence with the plunge of their anchors and the hurrying rattle of chain. At the Island of Unalaska, John offered to go with native guides in search of some "white strangers," and thus had a unique opportunity to spy out the land.

"I took with me some presents adapted to the taste of the Indians, brandy in bottles, and bread, but no other provisions. I went entirely unarmed by the advice of Captain Cook.... The country was rough and hilly; and the weather wet and cold. At about three hours before dark we came to a large bay, ... and saw a canoe approaching us from the opposite side of the bay, in which were two Indians. It was beginning to be dark when the canoe came to us. It was a skin canoe after the Esquimaux plan (a kayak) with two holes to accommodate two sitters. The Indians that came in the canoe talked a little with my two guides and desired I would get into the canoe. This I did not very readily agree to, however, as there was no other place for me but to be thrust into the space between the holes, extended at length upon my back, and wholly excluded from seeing the way I went, or the power of extricating myself on any emergency. But as there was no alternative I submitted thus to be stowed away in bulk, and went head foremost very swift through the water about an hour, when I felt the canoe strike a beach, and afterwards lifted up and carried some distance, and then sat down again, after which I was drawn up by the shoulders by three or four men, for it was now so dark that I could not tell who they were, though I was conscious that I heard a language that was new.

"I was conducted by two of these persons, who appeared to be strangers, about forty rods, when I saw lights and a number of huts.... As we approached one of them, a door opened, and discovered a lamp by which, to my joy and surprise, I discovered that the two men who held me by each arm were Europeans, fair and comely, and concluded from their appearance

that they were Russians, which I soon after found to be true.... We had supper which consisted of boiled whale, halibut fried in oil, and broiled salmon.... I had a very comfortable bed composed of different fur skins, both under and over me.... After I had lain down, the Russians assembled the Indians in a very silent manner, and said prayers after the manner of the Greek church which is much like the Roman.”

The meeting of the New England marine and certain Russian fur traders visiting Alaska to buy skins for the Chinese trade, is not without significance to the philosophic reader of history, for it is the first contact of a white civilisation advancing across America from the east with another and a belated white civilisation approaching the continent from the west. Had Columbus failed, what strange results might not have sprung from this Russian enterprise! But Yankee John rises to end the reverie. A notion of advancing his fortune by joining in the Alaskan fur trade is getting into his head, and he enters in his journal that skins which were purchased in Alaska for six pence were sold later in China for a hundred dollars.

Save for the tragic death of Captain Cook, who was attacked by natives at Hawaii, and “fell into the water and spoke no more,” there is little in the further history of the ships to halt the chronicle of Corporal John. The ships revisited the Bering Sea and the Russian Asiatic coast, cruised to China, and returned to England round the same Cape of Good Hope. The expedition had been at sea exactly four years and three months.

For two troubled years, John Ledyard walks the flagstones of a British barrack yard, for the war of the Revolution is being fought in America, and he can neither escape nor bring himself to take naval service against his countrymen. Barrack life, however, ends by exhausting his patience, he seeks a transfer to the American station, and the December of 1782 finds him aboard a British man of war lying in Huntington Bay, Long Island. As the island was then in the hands of the British, John obtains seven days’ leave, but patriotically forgets to report aboard. From a stay with friends at Huntington, he hastens to Southold, where his mother keeps a boarding house, then frequented chiefly by British officers.

He rode up to the door, alighted, went in, and asked if he could be accommodated in her house as a lodger. She replied that he could, and showed him a room into which his baggage was conveyed. After having

adjusted his dress, he came out, and took a seat by the fire in company with several other officers, without making himself known to his mother, or entering into conversation with any person. She frequently passed and repassed through the room, and her eye was observed to be attracted to him with more than usual attention. At last after looking at him steadily for some minutes, she deliberately put on her spectacles, approached nearer to him, begging his pardon for her rudeness, and telling him that he so much resembled a son of hers, who had been absent eight years, that she could not resist her inclination to view him more closely. "The scene that followed," adds the old chronicler, "may be imagined, but not described."

Travelling by night down the Long Island shore, John found a way to reach Hartford, and took refuge there at the house of his Uncle Seymour. He remained with him four months, writing an account of his voyage with Cook. The book was published, and is now exceedingly rare. "I am now at Mr. Seymour's," wrote John, "and as happy as need be. I have a little cash, two coats, three waistcoats, six pair stockings, and half a dozen ruffled shirts.... I eat and drink when I am asked, and visit when invited, in short, I generally do as I am bid. All I want of my friends is friendship, possessed of that, I am happy."

The long and cruel struggle of the American Revolution was drawing to an end. Peace was at hand. John Ledyard, now thirty-two years of age, found himself a personage in his own country. He was John Ledyard, "the American traveller." And he had lost his corporal's chevrons—popular imagination had seen to that; John was now Captain Ledyard; Major Ledyard, and even Colonel Ledyard to the eloquent. The American traveller! The great, fair-haired, "rangy" lad had grown into a tall energetic man whose countenance told of hardship and adventure; there were lines, such as sailors have, about his eyes, his nose was thinner and more than ever eagle-like, and the grey eyes had a look in them the world but rarely sees. The man stands at the window of the house in Hartford, looking down the still, New England street, but the inner eye sees only the northwest coast, the waterfalls on the sides of the sea ravines, the dark trees, and the crests of snow. He alone, of all the American world, has seen the unknown land; he alone can guide his fellow-adventurers of the young republic to the wealth that waits the gathering of the bold.

III

He went first to New York, and walked up dusty stairs into counting houses and shipping offices. "Send a vessel to the northwest coast," he said to those who would listen; "I have been to it with Captain Cook, it is a glorious, new land, and you may buy furs there for a song, and sell them in China at a great profit." Shrewd eyes watched him as he sat talking, leaning forward on the edge of his chair; and the papers on which he had written his plans for an expedition crinkled between wary and unsympathetic hands. So this rolling stone wished to guide them to the beds of moss! One after another, his interviews ended in a scraping of chairs, a polite return of his papers, and the formality of bows at an opening door.

He had a better reception at Philadelphia, whither someone had sent him with a letter to the great banker, Robert Morris. "I have had two interviews with him at the Finance Office, and tomorrow I expect a conclusive one. What a noble hold he instantly took of the enterprise!" And later in the same letter, "Send me some money for Heaven's sake, lest the laurel now suspended over the brows of your friend, should fall irrecoverably into the dust. Adieu." John's heart beats high, the dawn of fortune seems at hand, the eastern sky is gay. He goes to Boston, to New London, and to New York in search of a suitable ship, but all in vain, and as he searches, the season becomes too far advanced to think of prosecuting the northwest voyage; and presently the false dawn fades, Mr. Morris withdraws from the venture, and John finds himself in New London once again.

It was clear that he could hope for nothing from the merchants of the United States. "The flame of enterprise I kindled in America," he wrote, "terminated in a flash.... Perseverance was an effort of understanding which twelve rich merchants were incapable of making." His exasperation was natural enough, yet in justice to the American ship owner of the time, the economic disorder and poverty of the country should be noted, as well as the fact the owners were being asked to send a long and costly expedition round the Horn on the word of a solitary enthusiast. Would European merchants listen? The winter of 1784-85 found John at the great French port of L'Orient, living on a subsidy granted him by merchants interested in his scheme, but once again hope rose and perished like the seed upon thin ground.

From L'Orient he went to Paris, the Paris of 1785, the Paris of the Bastille, the great nobles, the philosophers of universal benevolence, and the usual Parisian miscellany of the world's most artful and distinguished knaves. Into this picturesque world, so soon and so terribly to be rent apart, stepped the new adventurer, Mr. Ledyard the American traveller! He was practically penniless, yet he managed to subsist in a modest manner. "You wonder by what means I exist, having brought with me to Paris, this time twelve months, only three louis d'ors. Ask vice-consuls, consuls, ministers, and plenipotentiaries, all of whom have been tributary to me. You think I joke. No, upon my honour, and however irreconcilable to my temper, disposition and education, it is nevertheless strictly true." He lived in a room in the village of St. Germain, and went to Paris afoot, a distance of some twelve miles. Other American adventurers were there, of the type that have long haunted Paris. John had no illusions about them. "Such a set of moneyless villains," he remarked, "have never appeared since the epoch of the happy villain Falstaff. I have but five French crowns in the world, Franks has not a sol, and the Fitz Hughs cannot get their tobacco money."

While in Paris, his dream of a trading voyage collapsed for the last time. Captain John Paul Jones listened to him, and fell in eagerly with his plans, but the necessary money could not be raised, and so ended the tale.

Poor as he is, Ledyard is still a personage, and walks boldly with the great. Lafayette befriends him. "If I find in my travels a mountain," said John, "as much elevated above other mountains as he is above ordinary men, I will name it *Lafayette*." He goes to breakfast at the house of the first American minister to France, and sees at the head of the table a tall angular man neatly and soberly dressed in black, a tall man with a bony but strong frame, angular features, light hazel eyes and sandy-reddish hair, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia. What a table it is,—French abbés and philosopher nobles, learned bigwigs of the day, visiting Americans, diplomats, and John Ledyard with the backs of both hands tattooed with the scrolls of Polynesia! John finds a sympathetic hearer in his host, for the great Virginian has a civilized man's interest in scientific exploration and a patriotic American's interest in American discovery. They stroll after breakfast, the statesman and the vagabond, and presently the minister suggests to his companion a voyage that fires his guest's imagination even as the name of Captain Cook had kindled it just ten years before.

“I suggested to him,” runs the Virginian’s letter, “the enterprise of exploring the western part of our continent, by passing through St. Petersburg to Kamchatka, and procuring a passage thence in some of the Russian vessels to Nootka Sound,^[1] whence he might make his way across the continent, and I undertook to have the permission of the Empress of Russia solicited.”

John listens, and listening, becomes once more the vagabond who ran away to see the world; then and there, the man flings off the disappointed trader. “He eagerly embraced the proposition,” wrote Jefferson. Yes, he will attempt just this thing, cross Europe and Asia, take ship to the northwest coast, and cross the wide American continent to Virginia. Did ever a man make such a resolve, and that man a penniless vagabond? Is it not genuinely so mad as to be magnificent?

“I die with anxiety,” he now wrote to a brother, “to be on the back of the American States, after having either come from or penetrated to the Pacific Ocean. There is an extensive field for the acquirement of honest fame.... It was necessary that a European should discover the existence of that continent, but in the name of *Amor Patriae*, let a native explore its resources and boundaries. It is my wish to be the man!”

Now came a false start from London, his last delay. “The great American traveller” sits writing at a table in his humble London lodging, perhaps again a room in Sailor Town. “I am still the slave of fortune and the son of care,” he writes later to his brother. “I think my last letter informed you that I was absolutely embarked on a ship in the Thames, bound to the northwest coast of America. This will inform you that I have disembarked from the said ship, on account of her having been unfortunately seized by the custom house ... and that I am obliged in consequence to alter my route, and, in short, everything, all my little baggage, shield, buckler, lance, dogs, squire, and all gone. I only am left, left to what?”

He counts his money, a familiar trick with him, shakes the clinking coins in his palm, arranges them in a row on the table, and finds he still has a few guineas left of the sum generously given him by Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, and certain other English gentlemen interested in the advance of geographic knowledge. He adds two final phrases to his letter before he seals it, and sends it off across the sea.

“I will only add that I am going in a few days to make a tour of the globe from London east on foot. Farewell. Fortitude! Adieu.”

It is the month of December, 1786, and from London, lost in smoky winter mist, the tall Yankee vagabond passes unperceived to dull Hamburg on the muddy Elbe, and thence to Copenhagen, and Stockholm of the Swedes. The fair-haired Northmen stare at a thin stranger with outlandish marks on his hands, who asks the way to Russian St. Petersburg. The winter route to Russia, they tell him, lies across the frozen gulf of Bothnia, the sledges strike off from Stockholm, and speed east over the ice to Abo, only fifty miles on the opposite shore; but this year the gulf is not solidly frozen, the ice is broken in midchannel; the horses cannot pass, and tremble, and turn about, and overturn their sleighs;—the traveller will have to wait till the spring frees the gulf of ice, and allows a boat to pass.

The words fall on the ear of a wanderer who will not wait. John Ledyard knows that he must reach St. Petersburg early in the spring, if he is to cross the Siberian wastes in the summer of this same year. A small delay means a year's delay. Rather than wait or return, he will walk the fifteen hundred miles round the frozen sea. It is the very heart of winter, and the vagabond's path will lead him north through Sweden into arctic Lapland, and south and east through the vast forests of Finland, now trackless in the depth of the snows. John Ledyard has no maps, no money, and no knowledge of the languages along his road.

Late in the month of January, 1787, a tall man wrapped in an English great coat trudges north from Stockholm into the grim wilderness of snow. To his right lies the great snow-covered plain of the frozen gulf, sweeping as far as eye can see to the level rim of the world; to the left is a broken country of hills and valleys covered with thick forests of birch and pine and fir, and channelled with frozen rivers running from the mountains to the frozen gulf. The winter wind howls north along the ice, gathering together great dunes of snow; there are crackings and boomings of the ice in the fitful silences. So thick lies the snow upon the pines, that not even one green twig protrudes from the huge, sagging pyramids. John Ledyard trudges on under the short-lived and sullen day of these high latitudes; the low sun casts his long shadow behind him on his broken footprints in the snow. In the clear green twilight, guided, perhaps, by the distant barking of a dog, he wanders from the way to some peasant's snow-topped hut, and

supps on bread, milk and salt herring with kind hosts gathered at the fire. He reaches Tornea in Lapland, turns south and east through the lakes and woods of Finland, and presently the giant sentries at St. Petersburg see John Ledyard trudging into town.

He reaches St. Petersburg before the twentieth of March. This unparalleled journey had taken him seven weeks, and he had managed to cover during each week a distance of some two hundred miles. He left no record of how he accomplished the journey—save to write in a letter these words “Upon the whole, mankind have used me well.”

“I had a letter from Ledyard lately dated at St. Petersburg,” said Jefferson. “He had but two shirts, and still more shirts than shillings. Still he was determined to obtain the palm of being the first circumnambulator of the earth. He says that having no money they kick him from place to place, and thus he expects to be kicked about the globe.”

The rest of the story is soon told. He obtained some kind of a passport from the Russian authorities, and began his journey to Siberia in the train of one Dr. William Brown, a Scotch physician in the employment of the Empress Catharine. With Brown he went three thousand miles to Barnaoul in the province of Kolyvan. From this city he made his way to Irkutsk —“going with the courier,” he wrote, “and driving with wild Tartar horses, at a most rapid rate, over a wild and ragged country, breaking and upsetting kibitkas^[2], beswarmed with mosquitoes, all the way hard rains, and when I arrived in Irkutsk I was, and had been for the last forty-eight hours, wet through and through, and covered with one complete mass of mud.” From Irkutsk he joined an expedition going down the Lena, and alighted at Yakutsk, only some six hundred miles from the Pacific coast he sought. It was the eighteenth of September. Imagine his dismay when the Governor informed him that the winter was so close at hand, that he must not expect to gain Ohkotsk that year. “Fortune,” exclaimed John, with his trick of play book style, “thou hast humbled me at last, for I am at this moment the slave of cowardly solicitude lest in the heart of this dread winter, there lurk the seeds of disappointment to my ardent desire of gaining the opposite continent.” Not knowing what to do he joined a scientific expedition in charge of one “Captain” Billings, a fellow veteran of Cook’s third voyage, and returned with his former shipmate to Irkutsk.

Suddenly—terrible news! He is to be arrested on the absurd charge of being “a French spy,” and sent back to the frontier thousands of miles behind. The details of Ledyard’s arrest remain a mystery to this day, but there is little doubt that the underlying cause of it was Russian unwillingness to have a citizen of the United States prowling about the Russian American claims. Something had happened; perhaps the imperial authorities had suddenly heard of Ledyard’s attempt to begin a rival fur-trade. Whatever the answer may be, John was handed over to the custody of a sergeant, and dragged back across Siberia and Russia with lunatic speed.

“I had penetrated,” said the poor fellow, “through Europe and Asia almost to the Pacific Ocean, but in the midst of my career I was arrested as a prisoner to the Empress of Russia.... I was banished from the empire, and conveyed to the frontiers of Poland, six thousand versts from the place where I was arrested. I know not how I passed through the kingdoms of Poland and Prussia or thence to London where I arrived in the beginning of May, disappointed, ragged, penniless....”

He arrives in London just as the African Society is casting about for a man to explore the interior of Africa. John calls on good Sir Joseph Banks who has so often been his kind and generous friend. Will Mr. Ledyard go to Africa? Yes. And when will he be ready to set out? “Tomorrow morning.” He reaches Cairo in August, and joins a caravan about to journey to Sennaar. “From Cairo I am to travel southwest about three hundred leagues to a black king.” Presently he is attacked by illness, he takes some fearful medicine of the time, shakes his head, and closes his eyes. The fair-haired lad in the sulky, the runaway undergraduate in the great canoe, the sailor, the corporal of marines and “the Great American Traveller” had gone on the longest of his travels.

Because the last years of John Ledyard’s life found him fighting on towards a goal he almost, yet never quite, attained, there are those who see him as a mere picturesque vagabond whose life had no genuine success. What a misinterpretation! The runaway Yankee lad had set out to see the world, and he had done so; indeed, John Ledyard had probably seen more of the vast world than any other being of his time. The vast loneliness of the sea which comes when twilight fades and night begins, blue, cloudy islands seen at dawn, the sounds of rushing brooks in the quiet of green valleys, strange folk making strange music under the moon,—all this he had

hungered to see, all this he had seen. He had achieved his ambition in spite of every barrier, he had girdled the earth on a sixpence and a ha'penny.

Even love itself had not held him from his road. In his letters, there is just one little phrase ... “domestic life ... matters I have thought nothing about since I was in love with R. E. of Stonington.” Mysterious R. E., by her Connecticut fireside, did she think of John trudging on, face to the wind and snow, resolutely shaping a reality out of his ambition and his dream?

When Mr. Jefferson became president, he often thought of the man he had met in Paris,—the first American to see the northwest coast, the man who had talked to him of the pine-crowded islets, and the inland mountains white with snow. John Ledyard the forerunner. And Mr. Jefferson, bending to his desk, continues to write his precise and careful letter of guidance for Messrs. Lewis and Clark whom he is sending to explore the west. Ledyard. Yes, indeed! I knew him well. A valiant fellow, gentlemen.

***Two:* BELZONI**

Two: BELZONI

I

A little over a hundred years ago the learned world of fashionable London was profoundly moved by the arrival of eventful news. After having been sealed to Europeans for some four thousand years, one of the great pyramids of Egypt had at length been opened, and torch in hand, a modern man had walked the untrodden dust of the oven-hot and silent galleries.

Now that all three pyramids stand open to the world, and tourists with green sun-goggles and parasols hesitate and giggle at the forbidding entrances, it is difficult to believe that the interiors should have been so recently a mystery. Save for a few measurements, however, the first years of the nineteenth century knew no more about the great Pyramids than the Renaissance had known; all was tradition, legend and conjecture. Of the familiar giants at Gizeh, only one, the Great Pyramid of Cheops, was open, and this but very partially so, for the famous well and the lower galleries were clogged with rubbish and débris. The second pyramid, that of Chephren, and the third, that of Mycerinus, were apparently solid mountains of limestone blocks with no sign whatsoever of an opening or a door.

It is scarce possible to exaggerate the hold which these locked giants had maintained on the imagination of mankind. The pilgrim of the middle ages thought them the granaries of Joseph, and stared at them with reverence; the conquering Arab called them the palaces of kings, sleeping enchanted in moated halls whose lamps were hollow emeralds.

All tales, however, agreed upon one point,—that the pyramids concealed a treasure. The Arabic conquerors of Egypt had already sought it, and one of them, the tenth century caliph, Al Mamun, baffled by the masonry of the third pyramid, had actually made a vain and lunatic attempt to destroy the entire edifice. So kings passed, and emperors and sultans and great ages of historic time, but the sunrise still rolled up the veiling mist from the great

plain of Egypt, revealing the vast, solemn geometry of the masters of the Nile. What treasure, what strange secret lay within these stones? Who would be the first to enter them? What would he find?



BELZONI

In the year 1778, Jacopo Belzoni, a worthy barber of Padua, and Teresa his wife, were rejoicing at the arrival of a son. They had christened him Giovanni Battista, or “Gianbattista” for short. Had a soothsayer of ancient Egypt appeared by the cradle, and revealed the infant’s destiny, the good *tonsore* would have surely opened his mouth and dropped his shears. For the soothsayer would have said something like this:

“This child will be a juggler at theatres and village fairs, a scholar, an author, and a traveller. For thirty-seven years, life will toss him about as a juggler tosses a ball in the air, but then his opportunity will come, he will win fame in a strange land, and solve the most romantic of all mysteries.”

The adventurous tale begins, strangely enough, in a monastery. The worthy Jacopo had fathered a brood of fourteen,—something had to be found for each and every one of them, and in the distribution young Giovanni Battista was handed over to the church. He was to find a place in the world for himself as a monk. From the parental dwelling on a by-street in Padua, the boy, still in his teens, walked the ancient highways of Umbria to the house of a monastic order in Rome. Somewhere in the old papal city, behind an encircling wall, his days of boyhood and youth began before the dawn with the clangour of a monastery bell, and ended with the echoing cave of a darkened church, the golden, pin-point flames of altar lamps, and the solemn chanting of the offices.

Years pass, years of quiet and withdrawal from the world. Of a sudden comes alarming news, the pot of the Revolution has boiled over, the French are crossing the frontiers and invading Italy. Presently there are disorders in Rome and a descent of French troops upon the city; the bells are silenced, the monasteries closed or seized for barracks, and the monks harried out into the street.

Among the monks thus compelled to abandon the religious life was Gianbattista Belzoni. The Paduan novice had grown up into a giant, a colossus even, for he now stood six feet seven inches in height, and was broadly and solidly built in the same proportion. And not only did Gianbattista have a giant’s strength, he had also the pride and the sense of decorum which accompany a giant stature. Those who are born of average height little know how huge is the influence of great stature on its possessor’s conduct and character! He who is born a Titan must act the

Titan; a frolicsome colossus is an outrage to Nature. Gianbattista, moreover, though of Paduan birth, was of Roman stock, and Romans have to this day an eye for dignity. Brown eyed, and black-brown of hair, with a giant's mildness, a giant's decorum, and an Italian's grace of address, young Gianbattista was a figure for Michelangelo.

Walking with a giant's disdain through the rabble of soldiers and revolutionists jeering by the monastery gate, the young monk passed forth into the world.

The homeless young Titan, he was only 22, may well have wondered what was now to become of him. At the monastery school he had chanced to make a special study of the science of hydraulics, but that was hardly a knowledge to be peddled about in those uncertain times. Having no choice, therefore, he fell back on his physical strength, and set about earning his living as a juggler and a Hercules of village fairs. From Italy the showman monk made his way through Germany, and then through Holland to the various kingdoms of the British Isles. Finding life pleasant in England, he settled down there, and spent the Napoleonic years amusing his hosts and becoming something of an Englishman.

For the next ten years, his life is that of an Italian mountebank in England. The English knew the huge, serious, well-mannered foreigner as "Signor" Belzoni; they saw him in their pantomimes and at Bartholomew Fair. He had a booth at the fair, and amid the smell of black puddings sizzling on the fire, and the shouts and cries of barrow vendors and showmen, our Signor delighted the London rabble with feats of strength and dexterity. His favorite show was a spectacle called "Samson," an edifying Biblical affair in whose course Belzoni pulled down the pillars of a stage temple with the most blood-curdling roars, crash, dust and general uproar. At Sadlers Wells Theatre, to quote an old play bill, his performance consisted "in carrying from seven to ten men in a manner never attempted by any but himself. He clasps round him a belt to which are affixed ledges to support the men who cling about him.... When thus encumbered, he moves as easy and as graceful as if about to walk a minuet, and displays a flag in as flippant a manner as a dancer on the rope." Another visitor became poetic. "Signor Belzoni," he wrote, "moved about the stage under this enormous pressure with as much steadiness and stateliness as the elephant does when his howdah is full of Indian warriors."

Ellar the comedian knew him well, and saw him perform; the giant was getting two pounds a week, and Edmund Kean was watching delighted in the stalls.

In England came Romance: there Gianbattista found his Sarah. This resolute spouse was an Englishwoman of a stature almost as magnificent as her lord's, and with a character and a mind as British as the dome of St. Paul's. Indomitable Sarah Belzoni! Writing of the Turks, she set down in her journal, "though I may be condemned for my opinion, there is no religion would suit them so well as the Protestant church of England." She called her husband "Mr. B.," and accompanied him on his expeditions, never once losing her nerve or her practical grasp of life. The gigantic pair now set about the serious business of earning a living.

After exhibiting "Samson" through Portugal and Spain, the Belzonis drifted to Malta, then a dependency of Egypt, and there Belzoni attracted the friendly attention of the Mohammedan governor. The adventurer's old interest in hydraulics was becoming practical; he had devised certain irrigating machines intended for agricultural use, and the governor advised him to go to Cairo, and bring these contrivances to the attention of Mehmet Ali, the quasi-independent governor of Egypt.

It is the month of August in the year 1815; the heat in Egypt is the heat of a dry oven; a little wind blows, but merely serves to pour the heat upon the flesh. There is no sun in the cloudless sky, only an inundation of tremendous light whose source is no more to be looked at than a god. Circling higher and higher, vultures ride the furnace of the air, eyeing the broad, low-lying plain, the winding Nile, the shrunken marshes, the cornelian sands, and the broken tops of the Memphian pyramids. At a landing in Cairo, three Europeans are disembarking from a Nile boat,—they are Gianbattista and Sarah Belzoni and James Curtain, their little Irish serving lad.

The monk whom Destiny had turned into a bohemian was now thirty-seven years old, and the many influences he had undergone had moulded an exceptional mind and character. On the one hand, he was a strolling mountebank; on the other, an educated man with churchly learning and a genuine respect for scholarship. He was an Italian with an Italian's suppleness, ingenuity, and Latin sense of making the best of what life

affords; he was an Englishman as well, with the English language on his lips, and ten years' experience of life in the English way. He wrote English extraordinarily well; he could draw passably, and from his years as a stroller he had gained a knack of getting along with men of all conditions and kinds. A stroller, a scholar, a Roman, an Englishman—was there ever such another Hercules? Through the streets of Cairo he rides, with a giant's aloof peaceableness and a giant's propriety.

He was weary now, it would seem, of Samson's roars and tuggings. He had accepted the cards which life had dealt him and done his best to play them well,—what else was there to do? Here in this new land, the game should begin again, and the showman vanish into the vagrant engineer.

In the dark underworld of vanished deities, the animal-headed gods of Egypt, the cow Hathor, the cat Pasht, and the jackal Anubis stir in their ancient dreams, for the first of the awakeners of their civilization is setting foot beside the Nile.

II

Negotiations with Mehmet Ali and the building and the test of Belzoni's water-lifting wheel consumed the greater part of a year; it was wasted time, for the Pasha decided against the use of the device.

From the uncertainty which followed, the adventurer was rescued by his old friend, John Lewis Burckhardt, the traveller, who now persuaded the British Consul General, Henry Salt, to send Belzoni on a special expedition up the Nile. A colossal head of "Memnon" (in reality a head of Ramses II) was lying in the sands at Thebes, and Salt wished to have it carried down the river, and shipped off to the British Museum. Belzoni accepted the charge gladly, and going to Thebes, surmounted a thousand difficulties, and carried off the prize. It was anything but an easy task, for the giant head, or more properly the bust, measured some six by eight feet and weighed over seven tons. Belzoni handled it with home-made machinery. The engineer side of him was real; it is a quality often found just below the surface in Italians.

Mrs. Belzoni was with him, and shared with her "Mr. B." a hut built of stones in the portico of the Memnonium. All the long hot summer, the giant

lady cooked her Titan's rice and mutton, and kept a practical eye on everything. The British matron was the terror of rival French explorers,—“Madame Belzoni, Amazone formidable,” they wrote in their accounts.

Other voyages followed which can not here be set down in detail. The first voyage saw the removal of the head and an exploring trip up the river to Abu Simbel and the cataracts. At Abu Simbel, it was “Ypsambul” to Belzoni, that greatest of rock temples was clogged with a vast fanslope of fallen stones and sand in which the colossi sat up to their necks. A second journey carried the explorer back to Thebes. The labyrinth of mountain tombs was still full of the ancient dead, some lying on the floors of their cave sepulchres, some standing, some on their heads,—all surfaced with a very fine and choking dust.

Mrs. Belzoni having lingered in Cairo, the explorer now and then accepted the hospitality of natives dwelling in the outer tombs. “I was sure of a supper of milk served in a wooden bowl,” he wrote, “but whenever they supposed I should stay all night they killed a couple of fowls for me which were baked in a small oven heated with pieces of mummy cases, and sometimes with the bones and rags of the mummies themselves.” It is a far cry from the sun-helmeted professors, the great officials, and the electric lights of Tutankhamen's tomb.

On this second journey, the explorer began the clearing of Abu Simbel, and discovered the tomb of Seti I in the Valley of the Kings, still the most beautifully decorated sepulchre in Egypt. Old usage called it Belzoni's tomb; new days have forgotten the explorer. Then followed expeditions to Philæ, to the site of the Roman city of Berenike on the Red Sea, and a journey to the oasis of Elwah which Belzoni mistook for the historic oasis of Jupiter Ammon. The fever of exploration now descended on Mrs. B., and the intrepid lady, disguised as a man, went off by herself on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem,—a feat of extraordinary fortitude and daring.

At the close of his second journey, Belzoni had cleared and opened Abu Simbel, discovered the tomb of Seti I, and explored Philæ, the Theban necropolis and the Valley of the Kings. He had shown himself venturesome, courageous, and resolute. He had a way of getting things done, not by shouts and the whip, but by a certain steadiness of pressure, as if he were putting his giant shoulders to a door and slowly forcing it inward from its

frame. There are passages in his account of his work which seem to reveal a quality of suspicion in the giant's mind; he could see the hand of rival gatherers of antiquities in every check and delay. Twenty-five years ago the trait would have required a moral explanation; the wiser and more travelled present simply points to the thermometer.

By an ironic turn of the wheel of fate, it chanced that the rival collector to whom Belzoni attributed his vexations was himself an Italian. Bernardino Drouetti, agent of France and gatherer of antiquities for the Louvre, had been born in Leghorn. The competition between this Frenchman from Leghorn and this Briton from Padua had thus a certain raciness and emotional quality. Keen as it was, the amenities were outwardly preserved, and Drouetti even went so far as to present Belzoni with the "rights" to a sarcophagus it was impossible to extricate. At Philæ, however, the duel became a battle, for Drouetti's henchmen rushed Belzoni and his party as the giant was making off with an obelisk. If Drouetti's indignant lament is to be believed, Belzoni snatched a shrieking, jabbering "Arab" out of the mob swarming about him, swung him up by the ankles, and used him *à la Samson* on the heads and shoulders of his fellow country men. The novel weapon, it is said, won a headlong victory, and the giant carried off his obelisk in peace.

Returning to Cairo during the inundation, Belzoni paused by night at the pyramids. So vividly were the stars of the Egyptian sky mirrored in the flood, that there seemed to be two heavens, one above and below. Awesome, even a little terrible, the vast and ancient shapes of the pyramids rose seemingly from the starry water to the splendour overhead.

The Pyramids. Mystery of ancient mystery! Belzoni resolved to match his knowledge and skill with this riddle of the years.

III

He went first to Gizeh, and wandered about the three pyramids, studying and observing.

From the sands of the Egyptian desert, which are cornelian in hue and strewn with colored pebbles much like fragments of ancient pottery, the pyramids rise as masses of old ivory stone suffused with a certain golden

rust; the description is laboured, but the effect is not to be given in a word. Belzoni, trudging the sand, watched the late afternoon light bring out the grey. The second great pyramid, the pyramid of Chephren, had taken his eye, and round it and about he went, now gazing up to the cap of reddish surfacing still in place about the peak, now pausing to study the huge confusion of sand and wreckage washed up about the base like a wave of shattered stone. Was there an opening, and if so, where? Or was the pyramid a solid hill of stone as the Egyptians had told Herodotus twenty-five hundred years before? The French scholars attached to Napoleon's expedition had sought an entrance in vain, and the Europeans resident in Cairo were meditating a scheme of collecting 20,000 pounds "at various European courts," and "forcing their way into the centre of this pyramid by explosions."

"It seems little short of madness," wrote Belzoni, "to renew the enterprise." The giant had now grown a fine black beard, and taken to wearing Eastern dress, huge white turban and all. It was the proper thing to do then when travelling in the East.

The entrance to the Great Pyramid being on the north, Belzoni studied with particular care the northern face of the second pyramid, and presently discovered there "three marks" which seemed to offer a clue. Just under the centre of the north face of the pyramid, the bordering wave of débris was high, as if it might possibly lie piled atop some entrance way; the accumulation of stone at the mound seemed less compact than the mass to either side, and the débris had apparently gathered since the removal of the surfacing. There was the place, there would he begin.

Somewhat to his surprise, he got his permission to dig quite easily, the authorities merely insisting that he must not disturb "ploughed ground." The capital on which he hoped to accomplish his undertaking consisted of a scant two hundred pounds, some of it a gift from Burckhardt, some of it a profit from the sale of "antiquities."

Early in February, 1818, the adventurer left Cairo quietly, and took up his quarters in a tent by the second pyramid. Alone in his tent he sits, this huge bearded man who has lived so fantastic a life; it is night, and he smokes his long Turkish pipe, and watches the giant Egyptian moon cast the pointed shadow of his pyramid upon sands traced with the paths of naked feet. That

monastery in Rome, the bells of other convents heard over the wall as one walked the garden in the cool of the afternoon, the rumble and galopade of a cardinal's coach over the stones,—how far away and old it all is in that still splendour of the Egyptian night!

At the pyramid all begins well, eighty natives have been secured, and Belzoni has put forty to clearing the ground between the temple and the pyramid, and forty more to clearing the débris at the rise by the northern rim. The plates which accompany his text show the workmen to have worn the short, rolled white drawers and turbans of this earlier day, a costume far more picturesque than the long-skirted nightgown affair and red felt “fez” of modern Egypt. A nimble folk these brown Egyptians; they scramble about the pyramids today with the agility of boys in an easy tree; even so they must have scrambled and chattered for Belzoni. He paid them sixpence English a day, and hired boys and girls to carry away the earth.

The giant sagely explained to his corps that it would be to their advantage to find the entrance to the pyramid, for they would then have another marvel to show to visitors, and thus get more bakshish^[3] than ever. The natives began with a will, but for several days their labors promised no indication of success. It was particularly difficult work. The fringe of wreckage had become solidly jammed, and the only tools to be had were spades meant for the cutting of soft ground. There were times when it seemed as if the workmen could scarcely proceed. At the end of a fortnight's digging, the party working on the ground between the temple and the pyramid had cut through some forty feet of rubbish to a broad pavement which seemed to encircle the pyramid; but the workmen at the north side had uncovered only deeper and deeper layers of débris.

After some sixteen days of this, the workmen began to weary of the task. “The Arabs,” said Belzoni, “continued, but with less zeal. Still I observed that the stones on that spot were not so consolidated as those on the sides of them, and I determined to proceed till I should be persuaded that I was wrong in my conjecture.”

On the morning of February 18th, an overseer of the workmen came across the sand dunes with promising news. A workman of the northern party had perceived “a small chink” between two stones of the newly uncovered lower side of the pyramid. Belzoni returned with the messenger,

and found the workers gathered in a talkative group awaiting his coming. Yes, there was a small open slit between two of the great stones, into which the giant was able “to thrust a palm stick to the length of two yards.” The workmen took heart; their night of foolish labour for this incomprehensible European infidel was seemingly ending in a dawn.

The loose stone, torn from its place, revealed a mystery,—a passage some three feet wide choked with smaller stones and sand. Belzoni, in his turban and loose white eastern dress, peered within, while his half naked, dusky workers pushed and peeped and whispered behind that Titan back. Was the mystery of the ages about to be unveiled? Would they presently behold the legendary spirit of the pyramid—an old man with a censer? This attendant guardian was still to be seen at sundown, making the tour of his pyramid at about half way up the sides,—a solemn, priestly figure who swung his censer as he walked. Trickle of sand fell noiselessly from the roof of the opening; they heard the drop of little stones; about them the quiet of the desert seemed to have become intensified.

On being excavated, this passage proved to be wider within, and after five days of clearing, the excavators arrived at an open tunnel leading inward.

“Having made it wide enough,” said Belzoni, “I took a candle in my hand, and looking in, perceived a spacious cavity ... bending its course to the centre. It is evidently a forced passage executed by a powerful hand, and appears intended to find a way to the centre of the pyramid.”

It was less a passage he had discovered than a wound. In ancient times some ruler of the land had attempted to force the pyramid, but the deed and the man had perished from the memory of the world, and the pyramid itself had hidden the deep wound within its side. To make the entrance, huge stones of the outer casing had been cut and sawed; then a ragged tunnel had been pierced directly into the heart of the masonry. The task had certainly taken toll of many lives. It was an awesome place, and exceedingly dangerous. Huge stones, which the piercing of the tunnel had left hanging by a thread, fell down, and every time that Belzoni crawled down its length of a hundred feet, he never knew but what a cry and a muffled crash might announce his living entombment in the dark of the edifice.

Europeans from Cairo now got wind of the giant's enterprise, and came riding over the sands to see Belzoni at his task. The discovery of the forced passage seems to have impressed them as an interesting failure, an attitude which struck at the giant's dignity and pride. He paused to mull things over in his mind, and gave the workmen a special holiday.

The false passage ended in a pocket of fallen stone. He would abandon his exploration of it, and continue his search for the real entrance.

Staff in hand, the huge figure, now resumes its trudge about the pyramid. The workmen have gone, the wind over the desert lifts the dust out of the hollows of the dunes, and brings no human sound; sand and ruin prevail. The adventurer wanders over the waste to the great pyramid.

It was then open, and somewhere in the hot, repellent heart of it, rank with the sour-foul odour of multitudes upon multitudes of bats, a typical European adventurer was working simply because the pyramids were his hobby. The name of this enthusiast was Caviglia, and he was the Italian master of a Mediterranean trading vessel flying the British flag. The good sailor had little education, and needed little, for his work was primarily a matter of removing rubbish, and discovering what lay beneath. In later years Colonel Howard Vyse had dealings with him, and found him temperamental. Captain Caviglia, dear excitable Latin, rushed out of his pyramid one morning and hurled on the Colonel's breakfast table a subsidy of forty pounds done up in an old sock. It appears that he considered the sum quite unworthy of his efforts. The Colonel, however, was equal to the occasion, and after taking out the money, returned the sock with his "best compliments." Such was the dawn of archæology!

Belzoni returned from his visit to his neighbour and countryman with a new notion in his head. Prompted by certain indications, he had been digging away the rubbish gathered before the centre of the northern face of the second pyramid, whilst the entrance into the Great Pyramid was not in line with the centre of that edifice, but some thirty feet to the east of centre, for the tomb chamber lay in the centre, and the passage entered at the chamber's eastern end. He would abandon his excavation at the forced passage, and begin again thirty feet to the east.

He went to the spot, and saw, or thought he saw, that the coating of rubbish was there not so thickly piled. Moreover, it appeared sunken as if an

entrance below it might have fallen in. "This gave me no little delight," wrote the giant later, "and hope returned to cherish my pyramidal brains."

Again work began merrily, for the natives had grown to appreciate the giant's sixpence a day. But they thought their employer quite mad, and Belzoni heard them whispering it to each other. "*Magnoon*," they said as he passed, and again "*magnoon*,"—the madman! More days of sunlight and scurrying and digging of a tribe of black-brown *fellahin*. On February 28th, a world of excitement and heart-quickenning anticipation; something which looks like an entrance has been reached, for now appears a large granite stone set into the pyramid at the same angle as the passage into the Great Pyramid. The shovels flew that day. On the day following, they have uncovered three great blocks of granite, one on each side and one on top, all "lying in an inclined direction towards the centre."

It was the entrance at last. By the second of March, the débris in front of the three stones having been cleared away, the long-sought opening was seen. It proved to be a passage, four feet high and three feet six inches wide, which descended at a steep incline into the pyramid. Its granite walls were undisturbed, but the passage itself was full of wreckage which had slid down the incline and piled up to form a barrier.

Provided with torches and candles, Belzoni and a few workmen now followed the passage for a hundred and four feet down into the dark. Whither was it leading them? The giant bulk of Belzoni nearly filled up the passage, as he came crouching almost double and holding a dripping candle light. Suddenly, to their great dismay, the passage came to a blind end at three solid granite walls.

Discouragement fell upon them as heavy as a pyramid. "At first sight," said Belzoni, "it seemed a fixed block of stone which stared me in the face and said *ne plus ultra*, putting an end to all my projects as I thought." Suddenly, a discovery, a catch of the breath; the stone at the end of the passage is not fixed solidly in place; it is a portcullis which can be raised; the barrier stone is already eight inches above the true floor, and rests on surface rubbish. There followed a hurrying back and forth through the passage, a coming of workmen with levers, and a time of hard work in the tiny cubicle of the passageway. The portcullis stone was one foot three inches thick, and rose slowly because the low ceiling permitted only a little

play of the levers. At the outer entrance, the workmen had gathered in a chattering and excited crowd; they questioned those who came and went—what of wonders within, and how vast was the treasure?

When the aperture had grown wide enough for a man to pass through, a native squirmed under carrying a candle, and “returned saying that the place within was very fine.” Belzoni, poor Titan, had to wait.

It had chanced that on the day before a fellow countryman of Belzoni’s, the Chevalier Frediani, had come to visit Gizeh; he had proved a pleasant guest, and the giant had invited him to remain for the opening of the pyramid. This second Italian now joined the little group lifting the portcullis. It was now high enough for Belzoni to crawl under, and he did so, followed by the Chevalier.

Over a thousand years, perhaps more, had passed since the tunnels into which they crawled had echoed to the sound of human voices. Belzoni led the way, carrying a light; Frediani, too, had a torch. The huge shadow of Belzoni followed along the walls; the granite twinkled in the first light of ten long centuries. At the end of the passage was an open pit which they descended along a rope, and at the depth of the pit were passages thick with dark and silence. Ghostlike arborisations of nitre hung on these lower walls, some projecting in fantastic ropes. Belzoni went off on one trail, Frediani on another. Presently the giant arrived at the door of the chamber of the tomb.

“I walked slowly two or three paces, and then stood still to contemplate the place where I was. Whatever it might be, I certainly considered myself in the centre of that pyramid which from time immemorial had been the subject of the obscure conjecture of many hundred travellers, ancient and modern. My Torch, formed of a few wax candles, gave but a faint light.”

He heard a sound of footsteps, and Frediani entered with his candles.

But the treasure of the pyramid? The sarcophagus of Khaf-ra, King of Egypt, was cut in the floor, the lid was awry, and the stone coffin “full of a great quantity of earth and stones.” Who had violated it in the long course of history’s four thousand years? No one knows. There is evidence that the Caliph Al Mamun had forced the pyramid, but there is no evidence that he found the mummy in its place. There are old Arabic tales of kings encased

in figures of gold, with magical golden snakes on their crowns which spread their hoods in anger, hissed, and struck at the intruders. All is legend and myth. The forced tunnel, however, had certainly once entered the original passages, but later on the violated masonry had fallen in, and barred the way.

Europe of the Dark Ages had never known of the attempt; the East had forgotten. The musing mind sees Al Mamun at the pyramid, mounted on a nervous Arab horse which paws the ancient sand; his mounted attendants and bodyguard have reined up behind him—Arabs with thin dark faces fierce as desert hawks. Captives, Christians for the most part, are digging away at the side of the great mass,—men of Byzantium, fair-haired Norman sailors blown on the African coast by a storm, little Spaniards from the mountain kingdoms which are so valiantly battling the Moors. And King Khaf-ra, whom the Greeks called Chephren, sleeps he within in “the dark house of the counting of the years?”

There were Arabic inscriptions on the walls, written with charcoal, but the characters were nearly imperceptible, and rubbed off into dust at the slightest touch. Belzoni thought he discerned an inscription which may be thus translated, “The Master Mohamed Ahmed has opened them, and the Master Othman attended this, and the King Ali Mohamed at first ... to the closing up.” Sir Richard Burton, however, perhaps the greatest of all Arabic scholars, will have it that the Arabic characters as Belzoni transcribed them are for the most part unintelligible. And there the matter rests.

The Belzonis spent two more years in Egypt, and returned to London in September, 1819.

IV

Oh, the Bight of Benin, the Bight of Benin
One comes out where three goes in.

—*Old British Navy Song.*

Green pleasant England again, the white cliffs of Dover, and the autumn fog drifting down on London and the ships. Belzoni's fame had gone before him to the capital. His popular title of “Signor,” which both Italianised him

and linked him with his mountebank past, now fell into disuse, and it was as “Mr.” Belzoni that he faced a new life of dignity and prestige. Winter found the traveller and his Sarah living happily in London lodgings, visited and consulted by the learned and the great. Belzoni kept his head. With his usual commonsense he was busily at work arranging an exhibition.

“Belzoni’s Exhibition,”—the words were magical a hundred years ago. All London came to the hall on Piccadilly when the doors opened in the spring of 1821. The old red-faced generals who had fought Napoleon came to stare at Pasht and Osiris, egad, the port-sipping gentlemen of substance, the fine ladies, and the sober citizens linking arms with their bonneted wives. To please them, Belzoni had reproduced two of the principal chambers in the tomb of Seti I, painting, sculptures and all, and displayed “idols, coins, mummies, scarabœi, articles of dress and adornment, lachrymatories, and a splendid mass of papyrus.” The tomb of Seti was “lit within by lamps,” and made a tremendous impression. And there was a poem by Horace Smith, “Address to a Mummy in Belzoni’s Exhibition” which all the world was reading. Now and then the giant moved towering through the throng, and mothers would bid their little flaxen-haired boys and girls to look at the man who had opened the pyramid.

A season in Paris followed the year in London, and then came the last great adventure.

The fever of exploring woke again within his veins, and he determined to cross the great African desert, and make his way to the almost fabulous city of Timbuctoo. He would land in Morocco, go south through the Moroccan possessions, and then join a caravan bound for the fateful city. The plan seemed practical enough, and on an autumn morning in 1822, the roving Titan bade farewell to his faithful amazon, and followed his boxes and baggage aboard a vessel for Gibraltar.

In Fez, the Moroccan capital, they seem to have played with him for a while, for the Emperor first gave him a permission to go through the country, and then withdrew consent. The failure may have been due to intrigue, as Belzoni imagined, or to the deep-rooted native distrust of Europeans; it was probably a combination of the two. Much chagrined, the explorer now returned to Gibraltar, and there determined on a course which did honor to his courage and perseverance. The way south to Timbuctoo

being barred, he would make his way along the African coast to the city of Great Benin, and then struggle northward to his goal. It was a route to daunt any explorer, for it led into one of the darkest and most dangerous areas of unknown Africa.

Sailing in trading ships and little vessels of one sort or another, the adventurer slowly made his way south along the west African shore to the English station of Cape Castle on the Guinea Coast. There Sir R. Mends, commanding the British naval squadron on the African west coast, befriended him and sent him to Benin in His Majesty's Gunbrig *Swinger*. On the 20th of October, 1823, the brig arrived off the bar of Benin River.

The brig *Providence* was lying off Obobi, and Belzoni boarded her at the invitation of her master, Captain John Hodgson. A month later, a "Fantee canoe" belonging to the ship is lowered overside; it contains Hodgson and Belzoni. The poor giant seemed "a little agitated," particularly when the crew, to each of whom he had made a present, gave him three loud cheers on his stepping out of his vessel. "God bless you, my fine fellows," cried the explorer, "and send you a happy sight of your country and friends." He was clad in his eastern dress and turban, and still wore his great, black beard.

A few days later word comes to the sailors that the guest whom they had so cherished, loved, even, as a shipmate, is lying ill at Benin. Good Hodgson hurried inland, and found the giant dying of African dysentery in Benin city. In a palanquin, they hurry him down the river to Gwato, hoping to get him to the coast and the sea air. But the end is at hand, an end calmly envisaged; the last of his strength he spends trying to write a letter to his wife; he entrusts Hodgson with a ring for her and a message full of the most touching affection, then yields the ghost. They buried him at Gwato under a great tree, and there he lies in the dark of Africa.

So ends the tale of the monk who passed from the peace of a monastery to an acrobat's stage in a village square. The young Italian had accepted his destiny calmly, and made the best of it, yet never bowed his head. Thrust violently from the most retired of lives into the most bohemian, he had remained,—*Belzoni*. There is something amusing, something rather fine as well, in the way that he sailed through life like a fine ship sent by the fates

of the sea on dubious voyages. And what a sense of achievement and honest adventure he had won from it all; it had all been so well worth while.

History will remember him as the first of modern explorer-archæologists. “One of the most remarkable men in the whole history of Egyptology,” says Mr. Howard Carter, who found the Tutankhamen tomb.

Belzoni the giant! What sounds run through his life—the sniping of a barber’s shears, the ringing of convent bells, the talk and endless brook-like chatter of crowds at a fair, the songs of laborers along the Nile, the shuffle of camels in the sand, and the squeak and grind of levers raising the portcullis of Chephren’s pyramid!

***Three:* EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY**

Three: EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY

I

About a hundred years ago, on a pleasant summer morning, two young Englishmen came down to the water front of the Italian port of Leghorn, got into a boat, and rowed off to look at the shipping in the bay. The two venturers made an odd pair, for the oarsman was a tall, powerfully built fellow with piercing blue eyes, thick black hair, and the features of an Arab, whilst the other was slender, boyish and yellow-haired, and had innocent blue eyes, and a schoolboy's innocence of beard.

The first vessel round which they rowed, a Greek trader, displeased them, for she was dirty of deck and sail, but beyond her lay a graceful full-rigged ship flying the Stars and Stripes. At the sight of this fine vessel, the following conversation took place. It has been set down word by word, for one does not take liberties with the phrases of the great.

"It is but a step," said the oarsman, "from these ruins of worn-out Greece to the New World; let's board the American clipper."

"I had rather not have any more of my hopes and illusions mocked by sad realities," protested his companion with a smile.

"You must allow," returned the other, "that that graceful craft was designed by a man who had a poet's feeling for things beautiful. Come, let us go aboard; the Americans are a free and easy people, and will not consider our visit an intrusion."

A turn, a few strokes, and the boat approached the American ship. By the gangway, an American salt with a quid of tobacco squirrelled in his cheek, was busy at something or other, and every now and then this honest fellow walked to the rail to spit calmly overside into the historic Mediterranean. While thus pleasantly engaged, he caught sight of the small boat coming alongside, and shouted, "Boat ahoy!" A mate came to the rail.

"May we go aboard?" said the dark, Arab-looking man.



TRELAWNY AS THE OLD SEAMAN IN SIR JOHN E. MILLAIS'S PAINTING "THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE."

"Wal, I don't see why not," answered the American mate, cheerfully and without ceremony.

"You have a beautiful vessel," said the first speaker, once he had gained the deck. "We have been rowing about looking at the ships, and admiring yours."

"I do expect now we have our new copper on, she has a look of the brass serpent," agreed the American.

"She seems so beautiful," said the first speaker, "that we have been wishing we might have a vessel like her."

"Then I calculate you must go to Boston or Baltimore to git one," replied the ship's officer. "There's no one this side the water can do the job. We have our freight all ready and are homeward bound; we have elegant accommodation, and you will be across before your young friend's beard is ripe for a razor. Come down and take an observation of the state cabin."

The hospitable seaman now led his guests to the state cabin, and would not let them go till they had drunk a toast under the Star-Spangled Banner to the memory of Washington and the prosperity of the American commonwealth. Peach brandy was the drink. The toast concluded, the mate rummaged for a moment in a locker, and then offered his visitors a gift right from an old time sailor's heart.

"There, gentlemen," said the sailor. "Guess you don't see nuthin' like this in these parts!"

"Plug tobacco," said the dark man.

"Yes sirree, Mister," replied the mate. "And real old Virginia cake. Jest you set your teeth in that, Mister," he continued offering the plug to the fair-haired guest, "and tell me if you've tasted anything so good since the big wind."

The fair-haired visitor, however, refused both the brandy and "the chaw," but managed to quaff a glass of weak grog to the memory of the first of presidents. The blue eyes gathered a strange fire.

"Washington," said this other visitor, "as a warrior and a statesman he was righteous in all he did, and unlike all who have lived before or since, he never used his power but for the benefit of his fellow creatures.

He fought

For truth and freedom, foremost of the brave,
Him glory's idle glances dazzled not;
'Twas his ambition generous and great.
A life to life's great end to consecrate."

"Stranger," said the American, studying the speaker, his shrewd eye bright with honest pleasure, "truer words were never spoken. There is dry rot in all the timbers of the old world, and none of you will do any good till you are docked, refitted and annexed to the new. You must log that song you sang; there ain't many Britishers will say as much of the man that whipped them, so just set down those lines in the log or it won't go for nothing."

A little shy, perhaps, yet glad that his words had given pleasure, the youth with the yellow hair sat down to write. The quill pen made almost no sound; and the faint noises of the harbor,—the voices of sailors heard across the water from other ships, the chuckling of little waves alongside, and the passing of bare feet on the deck overhead,—filled the polite quiet. Yielding to some fancy or inspiration, the visitor did not enter the lines he had quoted, but some others which pleased him even more. This done, the Englishmen parted from their Yankee host, and regained the dust, the street cries, the uniforms, and the hot yellow sun of the old Italian town.

A musing mind pauses to wonder as to what might have been the name of this Yankee ship anchored in Leghorn bay sometime in 1822. The hospitable mate, “a smart specimen of a Yankee,” who was he? And above all, what became of the ship’s log? Did it vanish from earthly eyes in the stormy tumult and breaking timbers of a wreck, was it tossed away as old rubbish, or does it still lie at the bottom of a sea chest in the piney dark of some attic in New England, an attic whose roof is brushed by elm boughs on windy summer days? Will the little mystery ever be solved? What a log book it would be to possess! For the young man with the crown of mutinous fair hair who wrote the lines and refused the plug tobacco was Shelley, and the Arab-looking oarsman his friend and companion, Edward John Trelawny.

A mysterious fellow, this “good friend Tre” of the piercing eyes. A word from Shelley’s comrade and admirer, Edward Elliker Williams, had served him as an introduction to the Shelley group, and his first visit to them had taken place late one evening while the family was at Pisa. One sees the Italian room in lamplight, a room to which sensible Mary Shelley must have given something of an English air; one hears the English voices through the quiet of provincial Italy. Trelawny enters, and the surprised Shelleys see a personage who is not at all English-looking; their visitor is a character out of Byronic romance, blazing eyes, pirate brows, bronzed skin and all. He looked like “a young Othello.” The newcomer, for his part, saw a rather bookish family gathered about a bookish young man “habited like a boy in a black jacket and trousers which he seemed to have outgrown”; it is Shelley he sees, reading as always, slender, bent a little, and “extraordinarily juvenile.”

“Is it possible that this mild, beardless boy can be the monster at war with all the world?” thought the young Othello.

While Shelley, as was his custom, went in and out of the room, as silently and strangely as a spirit, Mrs. Shelley asked Trelawny of news from London and Paris,—the new books and the operas, the new bonnets and the new styles, the marriages and the murders. A domestic scene. When Trelawny had gone, they spoke of him. Where had Mr. Williams encountered this remarkable person? In Switzerland. And was he not a sailor? Yes, he had been a sailor, and some said a pirate. A pirate, indeed! He could tell the most wonderful stories of gory battles on the Java seas, and expeditions to native strongholds in the jungles of Malaysia. Quite a remarkable person, “our friend Tre.”

“Trelawny,” says a distinguished biographer of Byron, “was a liar and a cad.” The judgment is prejudiced and severe. Whatever his faults, the man acted a leading rôle in one of the most romantic episodes in English literary history, and was well liked and respected by the great figures of the play. The world recalls his association with Shelley and Byron, his recovery of Shelley’s body after the storm, and the cremation in classical style he arranged on the sands of Villareggio; it remembers his flight with

Byron to the aid of rebellious Greece. A marvellous chapter, but only one of a life romance which is still something of an enigma.

Sailor? Pirate? Byronic stage-player? Let us see.

II

The known, the traceable, history of Edward John Trelawny begins with his birth in London in 1792, and comes to an abrupt end some seventeen years afterward. His father, Lt. Colonel Charles Trelawny, was a middle aged army officer who had retired to economise his wife's fortune, the relics of his own, and play the rôle of stern, Roman father on the stage of family life. Both family and family name were Cornish, and the boy began life with the heritage of those of Cornish blood, the heritage of an ancient and separate race whose antiquity runs past the pillars of Stonehenge into the dawn of time. There was a Celtic streak in Trelawny; the joy of battle was his, the quickening fire, the strange madness, and even the Celt's power over the souls of words.

Something darker and far more ancient, however, had fought its way back to life in Trelawny's veins. The boy was born a warrior, but not a warrior of Celtic Arthur's kind. The true comrades of his spirit were the heroes of the primitive Gaels, the mighty men whose blood seemed to "run up into their fiery hair," during the exultation of killing and war.

Fanny Kemble saw Trelawny in his later years during his visit to the United States, and divined the dark side of his inheritance. "Mr. Trelawny's countenance," she wrote, "was habitually serene, occasionally sweet in its expression, but sometimes savage with the fierceness of a wild beast."

When a young savage comes into the world, the problem of how to civilize him usually commands attention, but no one bothered his head about Edward John Trelawny. The savagery of neglected boyhood was allowed to grow wild in the congenial soil of the boy's obscure and primitive inheritance. It was not a pretty childhood, and the following anecdote preserves its quality.

The Trelawny urchins had an enemy, a tame raven "with ragged wings and a grave antique aspect," who used to drive them away from some fruits they coveted. This old demon had a trick of rushing at the children with outstretched wings, and though they threw stones, he carried the day. Little Edward John, however, having courage and the warrior instinct, kept up the fight, and presently managed to wound the enemy. Shouting and yelling, the children raced to the gruesome execution, and a final curtain descended on Edward John hanging the horrible blood-stained old mass of feathers in a noose made of a sash borrowed from his little sister!

Spelling lessons were battles. "Spell your name, you young savage," shouts the Roman father. "Spell, sir?" The boy, becoming confused, misplaces the vowels. At this, the Roman father "arose in wrath, overturned the table, and bruised his shins in an attempt to kick me as I dodged him, and rushed out of the room."

From the bosom of this peppery homelife, the great, bony, awkward boy was kicked into a school. There he encountered floggings, canings, and hideous practical jokes. The young Cornish Celt with the black hair and the wild blue eyes fought the savagery with savagery. His Roman father countered by handing him over to the Royal Navy. The new life was the school all over again, save that the sea-hazing was more brutal and the practical jokes even more atrocious. A strange trait, that English liking for practical jokes! Then followed a season at Dr. Burney's Naval Academy at Greenwich, a voyage on a frigate during whose course "Tre" revenged himself on a persecutor by jabbing him with a pen knife, and then a long world cruise on a sloop of war.

Brutalised at home, brutalised at school, brutalised in the Navy, it is a wonder that the young savage remained reasonably human. With the arrival of adolescence a sense of injustice and an urge to rebellion struck root in his mind. Rebellion was his only outlet, and in rebelling, he was most his primitive self. For the boy was only primitive, not vicious. Presently he decided that he had had enough, and made up his mind to desert.

The neglected sailor whelp, whom no one had received with affection or troubled to civilise, was now seventeen years old, he stood six feet tall, and was strongly built, though of a certain adolescent gauntness. "My face was bronzed, my hair black, my features perfectly Arab." The loneliness of adolescence troubled him, his parents' "hard usage and abandonment" gnawed at his heart; he felt "alienated" from his "family and kindred." He would follow a new trail, and "seek the love of strangers in the wide world."

The phrases are almost sentimental, and doubtless reflect genuine feeling, but the young savage was still the young savage in his way of life. Having determined to jump ship, the demon midshipman prepared to pay off an old score. A lieutenant of his ship, a Scotchman, had been nagging him, and "Tre" fell upon the man with the supreme strength which is born of anger. The ship being at Bombay, the encounter took place in a billiard room ashore frequented by naval officers. It was a ferocious business of blows, kicks, bruises, blood, cries and broken teeth. The lieutenant attempted to beg off. Tre's narrative then continues,—

"What,—you white-livered scoundrel? Can no words move you? Then blows shall!' And I struck him with the hilt of my sword in the mouth, and kicked him, and trampled on him. I tore his coat off and rent it to fragments..." Thus the young savage spoke and fought.

So ends that chapter of Trelawny's early life which is traceable. A certain use, to be sure, has here been made of his thinly disguised autobiography, but the use has been scrupulous, and the borrowings confined to an incident or two which are accepted as historic. Now comes mystery. After his desertion in Bombay, all trace of him disappears for some seven or eight years. What was he doing all this while, and what regions of the earth and sea were filled with his adventures?

The bronzed young man in his middle twenties, who drifted back to England either in 1815 or '16, had little to say to his questioners, though there were hints of a lurid career. As always, the mystery fed on mystery. The man's fine presence, his Oriental features, and his piercing eyes were enough in themselves to inspire interest; little by little the moonlight of romantic imagination gathered him into its beam. His intimate friends, it was whispered, heard blood-curdling tales of piracies as they sat in the chimney corner. Ah,—if "Tre" would only tell the whole story! They waited for it fifteen years.

The account must now anticipate a little, and leap the years to 1830. The summer months are at hand, and Mary Shelley, the poet's widow, is arranging and correcting an extraordinary manuscript from "our friend Tre." Sensible Mary Shelley, with fair complexion, her light hair and calm grey eyes,—what did she make of the wild tale in those numberless pages? One sees her at a desk, remedying Trelawny's frequent deficiencies of spelling, writing "postponed" for "posponed," and inserting "gs" in all words such as "strength" and "length." Trelawny treated the letter with a Cornish disdain. The manuscript in the widow's hands was a novel of adventure which Trelawny insisted was really an account of his own career. First purposing to call the book "A Man's Life," he later changed it to "The Adventures of a Younger Son."

The scene now returns to the billiard room in Bombay, with the Scotch lieutenant lying on the floor, barely alive. The young savage brandishes the heavy end of a billiard cue he has just broken over his enemy and in true Berseker fashion is about to finish his man, when a voice calms him, and forbids the murder. The speaker who has thus intervened is one De Ruyter, a mysterious adventurer who has made friends with the young savage. In spite of his Dutch name, he is an American, and even claims Boston as his beloved birthplace. The young deserter and this incredible Bostonian now escape to De Ruyter's ship, an Arab craft almost openly engaged in piracy.

The years that follow find the savage in his element; the tale is one of piracies, pursuits, boardings, battles, pistol shots, stab-wounds and slicings, and blood running bright and stickily through scuppers into waters alive with gathering sharks. There are tiger hunts, fevers, corpses, despairing yells, and sudden deaths numberless as sands of the sea. Having no definite base of operations, the precious pair indulge in grand and petty larceny all through the eastern seas; the scene is now the Indian ocean, now the coast of Celebes, now the inlets of the Philippines. What there is of "love interest"

is very slight, and centres about the corsair's Arabian child-wife, Zela, a Byronic heroine who perishes opportunely, and is then cremated on a funeral pyre.

There are three volumes of this fee-fi-fo-fum and manslaughter, the last ending with the return of De Ruyter and his acolyte to Europe, their separation, De Ruyter's death at sea while in the service of Napoleon, and the resolve of the hero to struggle on for the liberty of "the pallid slaves of Europe." Cutting a throat, it appeared, was but a whimsey when compared to the guilt of those who continued to consort with the "sycophantic wretches who crouch and crawl and fawn on kings and priests."...

"Romance can go no farther," said a contemporary critic in the *Military Review*, "than the actual adventures of the homicidal renegade and corsair, the 'Younger Son.'"

Time has confirmed this sensible opinion. A more brutal, a more ruthless, a more utterly unfeeling book does not exist in English literature. Save for the rhetoric about the "pallid slaves," and some Byronic transports over the body of Zela, the story knows less of sympathy than a crocodile. Moreover, it is nowhere amusing. What carries it along, what made it a success in its own time, and has won it a reprint in our own, is its superlative vividness. The picture may be that of a man, shot in the heart, spinning about; it may be the impression of thick resistance which human flesh offers to the hand that stabs;—whatever it may be, image or sensation, it is real, it is true, and it is the unconscious artist who affects us and no mere business of superlative photography. Overlong, chaotic, and ruffianly as it is, the book is no lifeless curiosity of literature.

Such was the existence from which the deserter and adventurer returned to Europe. Were one to swallow the book whole, it might well be imagined that the Trelawny who arrived in London was a proper subject for a gallows. Yet the adventurer who in England took the place that was his by birth as a gentleman's son was no skull and bones ruffian. There are no stories, no rumours that tell of ruffianism or ruffianly qualities; when this young Arab-featured man called on his neighbours, there were no blanched faces at the windows, or wild whispers to send the ladies upstairs and hide the spoons. Sometimes a good family will unaccountably produce a ruffianly type; the incident is rare, but it is encountered,—but Trelawny was not of these.

The Younger Son who had been born with something dark and ancient in his blood, who had endured a savage and neglected boyhood and adolescence, had returned to England reasonably civilised at least. Such was not the customary result of seven years of piracy!

The explanation is probably a very simple one; the boy savage, the demon midshipman, had grown up. With the arrival of manhood, the fundamental qualities of the man's character and original mind had broken through the barbarism of his early life.

The streak of Celtic battle savagery he had inherited was still in his veins; he never lost it. Seven years later, while accompanying Byron to the revolt in Greece, he spoke of “the best of all excitement.” The poet showed curiosity. “Fighting,” added Trelawny, and was not guilty of a pose. There were times when he showed a certain cold-blooded streak; the pirate was not touchily fastidious. He had a mind, he was a born observer, and he was nobody’s fool. There is no evidence that he had much imaginative quality. The ideas he had, he clung to emotionally, for they were really emotions in borrowed clothes. His enthusiasm for “Europe’s pallid slaves,” for instance;—what is it but his own transmuted resentment for his own loveless and cruel boyhood,—what was his hatred of “sycophants, priests and kings” but his own hatred of those in authority who had oppressed his youth? He does not appear ever to have arrived at any intellectual understanding of his attitude.

The young man of mystery returned to England with a little money, and presently carried out an anchor to windward. He married, and in a sentence of matchless pathos, lamented his rose-decked chain. He had become “a shackled, care-worn and spirit-broken married man of the civilised west.” There are those who say that the lady was frivolous and wasteful. It probably mattered little, for the adventurer’s relations with his various wives were astoundingly casual; they have something of the kiss and good-bye of the legendary sailor.

The roses of matrimony beginning to lose their petals, the younger son took to escaping on vagabond adventures. The incredible snobbery of contemporary British life, “its mystic castes, coteries, sets and sects, its ... purseproud tuft-hunting and toadying” got on the nerves of this man who had seen life in the raw. Fleeing to Switzerland, he made friends with another wandering Briton, one Mr. Edward Elliker Williams, a half-pay lieutenant of the Eighth Dragoons. Mr. Williams chattered for hours of his marvellous friend, Mr. Percy Shelley, the poet, who had so splendidly defied the ideas and conventions of contemporary Britain. There was a man and a rebel! Expelled from Oxford for atheism, the hero of a romantic elopement at eighteen, the hero of a defiant free union at twenty-one, the contemner and accuser of every dastardly sycophant, king and priest in the solar system. And a poet, sir!

Mr. Shelley the exile,—here was a man for Trelawny of his own unconventional mould. Shelley the rebel. Shelley the Lucifer! He would go to him; the sycophants, kings and so forths had better take care. “I swore to dedicate myself,” said the pirate later, “hand and heart to war, even to the knife, against the triple alliance of hoary headed impostors, their ministers and priests!” How the rhetoric brings before one’s eyes the liberal anger at the Tory reaction following the wild revolutionary years!

Mr. Williams arranged the meeting, and took “our friend Tre” to Pisa. Was “Tre” a little disappointed at the appearance of the exiled Lucifer and poetic arch-scandaliser; had he prepared himself for something robust, defiant and rhetorical, someone quite in his own style? There are times when this emotion seems visible between the lines of

Trelawny's account of the meeting. Whatever the expectation may have been, Shelley won his piratic visitor heart and soul. A young man with an Arab's thin nose and bronzed cheeks and a young man with great open eyes, a boy's fresh face and a crown of yellow hair,—the pirate and the scholar rebel—a fantastic alliance!

No wild outcries from British throats, however, disturbed the stout and comfortable Italian padres who stopped in the streets of Pisa to take snuff, and wandered off brushing the specklets of brown dust from their soutanes. Incomprehensible *Ingleses*! The exiles were all under thirty, they had all made their lives something of an adventure, they were all glad to be alive.

Destiny was preparing strange things.

III

The younger son, having decided to throw in his lot with the poet's, remained in Pisa. He liked the group and the environment, though the bookish intellectualism of the Shelleys swept him often enough beyond his depth. Byron, also living in exile, was a familiar figure, and there were rides together out into the country and pauses by the roadside to indulge in the noisy sport of pistol practice.

Shelley read, and hidden away in a little pine wood, wrote poetry; Byron lurked in his huge palace guarded by a growling English bulldog and a squad of chattering retainers captained by a giant Venetian gondolier.

The poets liked the younger son. He was a rebel too, in his way, his piratic career made him interesting, he had good stories to tell, and above all, he was a man of action who could be trusted to do practical things for the impractical. A boat is to be built, Tre will attend to it; a boat is to be sailed, Tre will do that; household goods are to be moved, we must talk with Tre. Affection forms quickly in such an isolated group, and there seems to have been a certain affection for piratic Tre, perhaps the first the man had ever known.

As the weather grew hot, Tre advised the Shelleys to go north, and found them a house at Lerici on the Gulf of Shezzia. The place was but a shabby barrack, but it was on the sea, and Shelley rejoiced. In the evenings, the whole population of men, women and children took to the water like ducks, and their shouts of joy filled the house. Shelley and Tre joined in the frolic, but Mary Shelley looked grave, and said it was "improper." "Hush, Mary," said the poet, "that insidious word has never been echoed by these woods and rocks; don't teach it to them."

The late spring ripened into summer, and with July came the historic tragedy.

Early in the spring a kind of yachtsman's fever had descended upon the little group. Byron had arranged for the building of a yacht, and Williams had designed a boat for Shelley and the friends at Lerici. In designing the hull, Williams had probably

attempted an imitation of the fast American vessels he had seen along the coast; it was a model he did not understand. One Captain Roberts, a sometime British naval officer then living in Italy, had the boat built under his eye at Genoa; she was twenty-four feet long and eight in the beam; she drew four feet of water and was schooner rigged with gaff topsails. Not a boat, this, to fire a sailor's heart, for the rig needs a crew to run it, and is difficult to handle quickly, especially in a small space. Two English sailors and a ship's boy had sailed the vessel from Genoa to Lerici. When asked how she sailed, the tars had replied that she was a "ticklish boat to manage," and that they had "cautioned the gents accordingly."

Originally christened the "*Don Juan*," the fateful vessel was now re-christened the "*Ariel*." To give her more stability, Williams filled her with ballast,—a dangerous business, for the vessel was undecked. The designer would hear no criticism of his craft.

"Williams is as touchy about the reputation of his boat as if she were his wife," grumbled Tre.

Such was the yacht in which Shelley, Williams and the English sailor lad, Charles Vivian, sailed from the port of Leghorn on July the eighth, 1822. The poet had sailed down from Lerici to welcome Leigh Hunt and his family to Italy, and this friendly office done, was returning home again by sea.

Two o'clock in the afternoon, haze, July dulness, and almost no wind in the Gulf of Spezzia. Trelawny, busy doing something aboard Byron's yacht, the *Bolivar*, watched his friends sail away. He had hoped to escort them to sea in Byron's vessel, but at a last moment difficulty over sailing papers had arisen with the port authorities. The haze was thickening and growing dark, a menacing thunder was rolling nearer; presently the *Ariel* vanished from Trelawny's sight into the leaden gloom.

A squall, needless to say, is a swift business anywhere, but the Mediterranean variety has a certain thunderbolt burst and a drenching vengefulness all its own. On the ships anchored about the *Bolivar*, barefooted seamen were running along the decks preparing their vessels for the squall which moment by moment assumed a more threatening look. Suddenly came rain, and in the rain the wind; the storm blustered through the night.

Trelawny went ashore, and listened all night long to the wind and the beat of the rain. He was restless with anxiety. Everything that there was of sailor in the man distrusted the *Ariel*, and he knew only too well that Shelley would be of little use in an emergency. The poet would be dreaming or reading a book at the very moment the wind leaped at the sails. The dawn revealed the shipping in the harbour rolling and pitching about under pouring rain; the anxious day ended without news. The following days found Tre searching among the vessels which had been at sea during

the storm, questioning sailors, patrolling the coast with the coast guards, and offering rewards.

Presently comes a messenger in some shabby-showy uniform, and an official letter written in Italian. The bodies have been found on the sands, poor, broken bodies of men lost at sea.

“Oh, bitter, bitter gifts of the lord Poseidon,” said the Greeks, remembering the bruised flesh turning in the waves. What was to be done? Tre says that it was decided by “all concerned,” that Shelley should be buried in Rome beside his little son. Before this might be done, however, there were laws and a thousand regulations to be fought through, for Italy was then divided in separate jurisdictions, and, moreover, bodies washed ashore were regarded by the law as possible victims of the plague. This, of course, was not Shelley’s case, but the law was the law.

It was Tre who found a way out of the difficulty. Was his notion possibly a memory of something he had witnessed in the East? He would cremate the bodies, and send Shelley’s ashes to Rome. It is no injustice to Tre to say that he made his preparations and gathered the funerary material with the business-like directness of an undertaker. He was the man of action as ever, the practical friend who could be trusted to get things done.

He attended to Williams first, and then gathered the forlorn little world of the exiles to see the last of Shelley.

It was a hot August day, and the whitish sands of Villareggio were tremulous with heat. A dead calm lay upon the sea, and save for Byron’s schooner anchored close off shore, the vast gulf revealed no sign of human life. Behind the beach lay a wood of tall, branchless pines, “their dark blue tops packed so close together that no sun could penetrate,” and far away, over the wood rose the marble-crowned Apennines. The pyre stood in the open between the wood and the sea. Byron was there and Leigh Hunt, a detail of soldiers, a few coast guards, and some Italian great folk who had ridden out in their carriages to watch so unaccountable a proceeding. Following ancient ritual, the exiles poured salt, oil and wine upon the pyre; the little first flames rose yellow towards their hands. A lonely sea bird came circling near, the pyre burnt with little smoke, and thus the body of Shelley dissolved into the air.

Only the heart refused to burn, though in the hottest of the flame. Tre snatched it forth, and burnt his hand so doing. When all was done, and the pyre burnt out, he gathered the ashes together, put them in an oaken box, paid his soldiers, and went off to Rome with his parcel.

A chapter of his life had come to an end. The little group dispersed, Byron remained to quarrel on with the Hunts, the widows went to England. Tre had been a staunch and helpful friend, and Mary Shelley never forgot the debt. She could write later that Trelawny’s conduct “impressed us all with an affectionate regard and a

perfect faith in the unalterable goodness of his heart.” She knew that it was good to have a friend. *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, on hearing of the drowning, had remarked, “Mr. Percy Shelley is a fitter subject for the penitentiary dying speech than a lauding elegy, for a muse of the rope rather than that of the cypress.”

Italy in the autumn, and an empty world. Tre lingered on a year, and found diversion in riding about the countryside. An American-born negro followed him as a groom; the peasants stared at the strange pair galloping by.

Then came a letter from Byron, and life began again with adventure and war.

IV

The Greeks had risen against their Turkish masters, a committee of enthusiastic lovers of liberty had been formed in London to advance the cause, and this committee had persuaded Byron to act as their agent in Greece. From the point of view of what the cant of the day calls publicity, the choice was an excellent one; considered with a harsh and practical eye, it was absurd. This nervous, temperamental artist with the habits and posing mannerisms of a regency beau, this traveller who scarce could walk a hundred yards on his shrunken and deformed feet, yet hid his pain and weakness in a cloak of attitudes,—surely here was no man to manage a horde of wily Levantines all trying to advance their own fortunes, and snatch what they could for themselves of the English subsidy.

Having accepted the task, Byron turned at once to the practical friend. “My dear T,” he wrote, “you must have heard that I am going to Greece. Why do you not come to me? I want your aid, and am exceedingly anxious to see you.”

War and adventure! Trelawny wasted no time in exchanging the vineyards of Italy for Grecian mountain slopes and olive trees. Then came a mistake. He abandoned Byron, and went off to adventure by himself.

Tre had never really liked the noble lord, perhaps because Byron, being a man of the world, had a clearer understanding than Shelley of Trelawny the man and his place in life. A stray letter of Claire Clairmont’s, Byron’s sometime mistress, suggests that Tre secretly cherished resentment for some sharp remark. Whatever the explanation may be of Tre’s hidden attitude, the practical man had no intention of wasting his time with the poet, but left him to his fate. He seems to have forgotten that he had come to Greece with Byron and at Byron’s invitation and suggestion.

“I well knew that once on shore, Byron would fall back on his old routine of dawdling habits, plotting, planning, shilly-shallying and doing nothing,” he complained. And again, “Could I then longer waste my life in union with such imbecility, amid such scenes as there are here, when there is excitement enough to move the dead?”

The angry phrases make the adventurer's motives clear and perfectly comprehensible, yet leave the abandonment of the poet a matter for controversy. Byron had called Tre to his side, Tre had accepted with alacrity; there was no solemn engagement, no cant about duties and so on; Trelawny was free to do as he pleased. A meticulous sense of honor might have detained him, but then the finer shades of honor never plagued Trelawny.

Crossing from the island of Cephalonia to the mainland, the free-lance now made his way through the grey mountains and the ravaged country side to the camp of Odysseus, chieftain of Eastern Greece. Tre thought him a man after his own heart, and wrote enthusiastically of his new friend. Of all the feudal leaders of rebellious Greece, this was the man! The adventurer's life began to be worth living, there were ambushes, descents on villages, attacks on Turkish cavalry, and looting expeditions. He was fighting for liberty, as Shelley would have wished him, but he had no illusions about those "pallid slaves," the newly liberated Greeks. He quite agreed with Colonel Napier's famous remark, "My dear Mr. Trelawny, no one should assume any direction in Greek affairs ... without the help of a portable gallows."

Meanwhile in the mud and malaria of Missolonghi, lived the man whom every feudal chieftain hoped to coax into his hands, the noble Lord Byron, agent in chief of the Greek committee. At Odysseus' suggestion, Trelawny set out for Missolonghi to plead the chieftain's cause. He arrived there in the rain, and met dejected stragglers riding away,—the English milord was dead. The fretful, bewildered satirist had perished like a bird caught in a net of dirty twine.

On receipt of this news, Tre gathered together the wreckage of Byron's entourage of adventurers who had drifted in to fight for the Greeks, and led those who were worth leading to Odysseus. He had now married Tarsitza Kamenou, the chieftain's sister, and had thus become a member of the family. Presently Odysseus made a kind of truce with the Turks, and Trelawny retired to hold the chieftain's stronghold, a romantic cave high in the crags of Mount Parnassus. It was while he was in this cave that an English adventurer whom he had befriended tried to assassinate him. Trelawny was dangerously wounded. "Two musket balls," he wrote, "fired at the distance of two paces, struck me and passed through my frame work and damn near finished me." With truest chivalry, Tre spared his cowardly assailant, and rescued him from his Greek associates, who wished to do unpleasant things.

Events moved fast. Odysseus, falling into the hands of the Greek loyalists, was adjudged a traitor, and thrown from the Acropolis. Tarsitza bore a daughter, and, this accomplished, disappeared from the scene; some say into a convent. With the help of friends in the British Navy, Tre then escaped from Parnassus to a refuge in the Ionian Isles, and lingered there two or three years watching events. "I do not wish to visit England in my present state of poverty," he wrote.

Then came the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino in '27, and a breathing spell of success for the Greeks. In the July of the following year, the adventurer reached Southampton with his little half-Greek daughter in his arms.

V

With the return from Greece, the great days of adventure are at an end, the rest of Trelawny's long life is the story of the kind of man the world calls a "character."

The pause in England was brief, and in 1829 he returned to Italy, took a house in Florence, and busied himself bringing up his little daughter Zela, born to him of his Greek wife, and writing his autobiographical romance. It seems reasonably sure that sometime during these Italian years he proposed to Mary Shelley, but without success; the lady was not exactly a person to be an incident in anybody's life. The pirate, now a man of forty, then translated his affections to Claire (Jane) Clairmont whom he had met at Lerici in the romantic days. This love affair by letter lasted for long years. Tre was still Tre the corsair and Byronic lover. "Yes, Jane," he wrote, in a letter full of rhetoric and misspelling,—“much as endurance has hardened me, I must give you the consolation of knowing that you have inflicted on me indscribable tortures.”...

This friendship had one unfortunate result; the lady hated Byron and his memory with an all consuming hate, and this poison spread to Trelawny's mind, making him cruelly hostile to a man he had never understood.

England again, and then a voyage to the United States, the purchase of the freedom of a slave, and a swim in the Niagara River. At Niagara a ferryman muttered that he was all "tuckered out." "How old are you?" cried Tre as he scrambled up the bank after his wild swim. "Thirty-eight," replied the ferryman. "Then you are not worth a damn," shouted the adventurer rudely. "You had better look out for the alms house!"

English society welcomed him back; Shelley was coming into his own, the Byron legend had taken root, the "Adventures of a Younger Son" had been a striking success, and all the English world was anxious to see the last of the great company. Picturesque, dark and Arabic as ever, and possessed of great physical strength, Tre moved among the mirrors, the teacups and the talk, spinning his wild yarns and blazing out in fine rhetorical damnations of all poppycock and snobbery. After 1846, he retired to Usk in Monmouthshire, married, and busied himself planting, building and teaching scientific husbandry.

The seventies found him the last survivor of the past though Byron's giant gondolier, the romantic "Tita," had grown old along with him. The Hercules had come to England, found a place with the Disraelis, and married Mrs. Disraeli's maid.

Trelawny had now become venerable, grown a white beard, and brought up two sons and a daughter. The little Greek girl had married very happily. "Our friend Tre"

was now a fierce, venerable, wild-eyed, magnificent old man full of opinionated notions on many subjects. He had taken to preaching natural living, the virtues of abstemiousness, and the folly of wearing heavy underwear. To the generation of Rossetti and Burne Jones, he was "Captain" Trelawny, the fiery ancient who had been a comrade and friend of the gods.

Joaquin Miller saw him at the Savage Club in London. "On one occasion," wrote the Californian, "he came in while a winter storm was raging, and he must have been wet all through. But he would not drink with us. His collar was open after the fashion of Walt Whitman, and he had neither overcoat nor umbrella. He stood with his back to the fire, straight and strong as a mast, looked about over us in quiet disdain for a while, then took off his coat, hung it over the back of a chair by the fire, and sat by and watched it drying till the storm abated." When Miller went to visit him, old Tre "insisted in a most mysterious tone of voice that he had blood from some extinct race of kings in his veins, and that he had in early days been a famous pirate." At eighty-one, he met undaunted the unconquerable enemy. He rests beside Shelley in Rome.

What a life the great, bony, awkward boy had made for himself, what a quality of courage and defiance it has! The man would have fought the stars in the courses. Being what he was, he had to see life as a struggle, and the best of him lies in the way that he accepted every challenge with a singing joy. The fighting type of human being very often finds a certain robust satisfaction in life, and so it was with Trelawny. Whatever he had done, whatever he had been, life had been gloriously worth living under the sun. And is it not strange that the great adventure of this life of struggle and strange lands should have centred about a lamp-lit room in a villa in Italy, and a friendship with the most fragile and the unworldly being of his time?

***Four:* THOMAS MORTON OF MERRY-
MOUNT**

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I

In a little room built of brown logs, and with casement windows open to the sun and the sounds of early summer, the pilgrim elders of Plymouth sat at table discussing a scandal on the coast. The abomination was amongst them, the sighing after strange flesh, yea, the very Calf of Horeb! At a plantation on the sylvan shores of the Great Bay of the Massachusees (for so was Boston Harbor anciently known) there had been held a scandalous carousal, much “quaffing and drinking of wine and strong liquors” and “friskings” worthy of the “madd Bacchinalians.”

So Morton of Merry-Mount, the Lord of Misrule, was still at his tricks! This vagabond lawyer from London, this poet whose verses “tended to lasciviousness,” this scholar who hurled Latin puns at the saints of the elect, had gone far enough. “A feast of the Romans goddess Flora” in their unprofaned and sanctified wilderness! Captain Standish shall bring this scoffer to the rod, and his immoral merriment shall be stamped upon and quenched as men quench the embers of a fire. Presently a drum sounds its note of authority in the Plymouth street, and Standish marches away on an expedition which is still echoing down New England history.

It is not difficult to imagine the scene in the log-built room, the sombre elders with their lips drawn thin and judgment in their eyes, the old, angry phrases of punishment and vengeance coined thousands of years before under the desert’s pitiless sky, the narrator of the events leaning forward to tell his unseemly news of the impious merriment, and in the lulls of quiet and shocked meditation, the trills of a New England cricket and the neighbourly talk of birds.

Morton of Merry-Mount, first of American defenders of cakes and ale, song, music and the dance! The tale of how this man from Shakespeare’s London scandalised the righteous of Massachusetts Bay, fought their

tyrannous abuse of power, and set them by the ears with a defiant jollification is the first of American comedies. It begins with a prologue in old England, a manor house in a wooded English park, and the lamentations of a lady in distress.

II

Dame Alice Miller, widow of a well-to-do gentleman of Swallowfield in Berkshire, was in trouble and distress of mind,—she was at odds with her own son. This son, co-executor with his mother of his father's will, was cruel, violent, and ungovernable; he had been summoned to court for throwing a neighbour's wife out of her pew during a church service; he was now attempting to brutalise his mother into giving him full control of all inherited property. As the poor woman had the interest of five little daughters and a posthumous son to protect from this ruffian, her days were anything but happy ones. Driven to the very last wall, she engaged an attorney to protect her and her minor children. His name was Thomas Morton, and he had been bred to the law in London at Cliffords Inn.

In the year 1617, James I being on the British throne, this advocate, Thomas Morton, was a man a little over forty, of robust body, and of fair height and agreeable presence. He was a man to know something of the properties in the case, for he was himself of the landed gentry; his father had been a soldier of the old queen, and he had been brought up in the country in the style befitting the son of an English country gentleman. With his great boots rising to flaring tops, his Stuart dress, long hair, and hat with a plume, this advocate from London must have had somewhat the air of a Cavalier.

Actually, however, the Stuart dress misdated him, for Master Thomas Morton of Cliffords Inn was like his client, Dame Alice, an Elizabethan born and bred.

An Elizabethan, the fact explains both the man and his adventures. The boyhood of this advocate with the plumed hat had been spent in an England which was still the Merry England of Shakespeare's artisans and Oberon and Titania. Brought up as the son of an English country gentleman, he had known and spoken to Bottom and Peter Quince at the doors of their thatched cottages; he had shared in the field sports, the hunting and the

falconry which were the pleasures of rural gentlefolk. From this Shakesperian countryside, the youth had passed to the little, glorious London of Elizabeth.

Outwardly, the London of the old Queen was still largely mediæval. The libraries were ancient and churchly, the taverns vast as the Tabard Inn of Chaucer's pilgrimage, and the streets through which the bedizened old Queen moved in the pageantry she loved were narrow and puddly. The story of Raleigh's cloak preserves no empty courtesy. Dwelling as a student of law in this city of the poets and the theatres, the spirit of the great yet vanishing age had possessed the young man from the country; he had its zest of life, its eagerness to find and make use of beauty, its adventurousness of the spirit and the flesh, its honest, earthly good humour, its literary conventions, and even its delightful pedantry. He read Don Quixote, the plays of Ben Jonson, and a quaint world of Latin writers whose names only scholars nowadays remember, and he may well have seen the Man from Stratford in the street.

One imagines the picture, the ancient, oaken room in the red brick manor, the quiet of England, and the drowsy murmur of the trees, the brocaded chairs, the distressed lady, and the lawyer from London gathering the case together with shrewdness and intelligence.

Now follow other conferences, time ripens, the courts are slow and the years are long. The case of Dame Alice Miller and her little children against their ruffianly kinsman becomes a thing of writs and counter writs, processes, summons, visitations and suits and counter suits.

Presently George Miller, the ruffian, hears news which causes him to burst into a rage of foul-mouthed oaths,—his mother has married the London advocate!

As the case had now been dragging on for some five years, the advocate can hardly be accused of artfully hurrying a distressed lady into marriage. Morton and his wife now moved to the manor-house, the case became a matter of "Thomas Morton et Ux" against George Miller, and the hatred which the ruffian had borne to his mother's protector blazed up into fresh malignity. The point is important, for in this blackguard Morton's relentless and cruel foes of the Puritan bay were to find an unexpected and valuable ally.

Matters now become more complicated than ever; there is talk of riots and assaults, the year 1623 arrives, and then, ... silence.

What had happened? No certain answer can be made, but everything seems to point to the death of Dame Alice Morton as having occurred in either 1623 or '24. There were other complications as well. Certain decisions in the case had gone against Morton, and he had been slow to follow their decrees. The attitude is a not unnatural one for a man who has fought a long battle with a scoundrel, and loathes giving the smallest advantage to a vindictive and unchivalrous foe. Morton cannot be held guilty of having committed any serious breach of the law. Indeed in all this rather ugly and unnatural business, Thomas Morton's conduct as an attorney and as a man of honour appears above reproach. His management of the case had been alert and aggressive, and he had shown a sound knowledge of seventeenth century law.

Now comes a second mystery,—Morton himself disappears. George Miller, succeeding to his mother's inheritance, takes over the manor house in the ancient wood by Swallowfield, and finds his stepfather gone no one knows where. Nothing remains to tell of the advocate of Cliffords who stepped so strangely into this tangle of lives and wills; even his hunting dog has disappeared. Silence in the old house. One hears George Miller shout some dull-tongued foulness in a tone that is blend of anger and relief, and then away he rides, this prince of cads, wondering how he may best defraud the minor heirs.

Where was the man of Cliffords Inn? The Elizabethan adventurer in him had led him travelling. Did he seek forgetfulness? His wife dead, the long, turbulent dispute settled in a kind of way, had he sought to close a door on the makers of strife and the memories of disorder? He had surely vagabonded to the south, for he once set down this, "I am not of opinion with Aristotle, that the landes under *Torrida Zona* are altogether uninhabited, I myself having been so neare to the equinoctiall line that I have had the sun for my Zenith."

Suddenly he emerges again into the light of history. Something brings him in touch with one Captain Wollaston, an English trader who is fitting out a ship for a trading expedition to America. This Wollaston has gathered thirty young and youngish Englishmen, "his servants," and with their labour

he will establish a trading post on the still uninhabited coast of New England.

It is a day in the early spring of 1625, and Wollaston's ship is going to sea. Upon the upper deck of the *Mayflower*-like vessel, stands the vagabond advocate, muffled in the great cloak of the period. A hunting dog stands near.

Surely Thomas Morton "of Cliffords Inn, Gent." thus bidding farewell to England, must have remembered the manor at Swallowfield,—the woodsy afternoons and the long, long twilights, the hunts with dog and gun, the falcons leaping to the blue, and the call of the hunter's horn far away in the forest,—the most beautiful, the most melancholy-golden music in the world. And because it was the early spring, perhaps he recalled to mind the May day revels of the village, the dance about the garlanded pole, the merry, rustic clowneries, and the shouts and laughter. Alas! something was happening to his Merry England. Bottom and Peter Quince had taken to reading the theology of St. Paul, and cracking each other's pates over its precise interpretation. Whither might it not lead? Perhaps even to civil war.

Thomas Morton was accompanying Wollaston as an investor in the trading enterprise. He was now a man of robust middle age, nearer fifty than forty, and mellowed by years, books, and a genial philosophy of life.

Unless all signs fail, there was a copy of Don Quixote in his baggage. Little did he know that he was soon to have his own battle with the windmills!

III

"The Great Bay of the Massachusees," for so was Boston Harbor anciently known, is a pleasant place with its long, whaleback islands, its countrified, hillocky shores, drumlin mounds, and inland glimpse of the little mountains known as the Blue Hills; it still retains something of a sylvan air; in 1625 it was a sylvan wilderness. Until very recent years, the most conspicuous feature of the bay was a vast field, almost a domain, sloping from a thicket of inland trees to the curving beach of the pleasant Quincy shore. In July, when the grass of the field had ripened to yellow hay, this pleasant open land poured down to the sea like a river mouth of gold.

Cleared and cultivated, by the Indians long before the arrival of the whites, the old domain had that mellow quality which Nature sometimes assumes when long allied with man.

A pleasant field, for the presence of the sea dwelt there and was not terrible and alien,—a field in which the hot, earthy odours distilled by an August sun mingled pleasantly with the fragrance of salt meadows. The sea birds of the North knew it, and ran along the edge of the ebbing tide, shadows of gulls passed swiftly over its bending grass, the plover rose piping from the reeds, and there were pondlets in it, in tiny round hollows, by whose shores yellow-speckled turtles sunned their backs. The Indians called the field *Passonagessit*.

Such was the domain of open land which Wollaston, the English trader, saw upon the greenwood shore of the “Bay of Massachusees” on a morning in early summer in the year 1625. The wilderness was his alone. Save for a small and declining trading station established at Wessagusset on what is now the Weymouth shore, the sylvan bay was an uninhabited land. The great Puritan migration of 1630-31, which was to found the town of Boston, was still six years away, and only at Plymouth, some forty miles south along the coast, did the New England forest echo to the day-long sermon soon to thunder through the land.

The imagination rebuilds the scene of the landing, Wollaston’s vessel anchored off the field, the shallop and her little boats plying between her and the shore, the ferrying over of the indentured bondmen, all well sunburnt from their long voyage and longing for a smell of fresh victuals on their wooden plates, the unloading of the stores, “the implaments,” the ancient muzzle loading muskets and fowling pieces, and the bags of powder and ball. One sees Thomas Morton, in great-boots, cape and plume, coax his hunting dog into the boat, one hears the scrape of the keel upon the gravelly beach, and an excited barking—the advocate of Cliffords Inn and his cherished “dogge” have arrived in the new world.

Presently a brave ring of the axe,—a sound that echoes through American history,—floats down the field to the bay; houses and chimneys rise, and the little plantation takes shape in the Massachusetts wilderness.

The vagabond advocate, beholding the vast, unsullied greenwood, loved it with a devotion few have equalled. He wandered everywhere north and

south, he visited Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, he went north beyond the beaches of New Hampshire to the surf and the ledges of Maine. It was in truth a noble wilderness, and to Thomas Morton it became a veritable promised land, a "New English Canaan." His own "Bay of Massachusees" he thought "the paradise of those parts," and meditating on its virtues, his mellow spirit broke into a fine, old-fashioned Elizabethan panegyric.

"The more I looked, the more I liked it. And when I had more seriously considered of the bewty of the place, with all her faire indowments, I did not thinke that in all the knowne world it could be paralel'd, for so many goodly groves of trees, dainty, fine, round, rising hillucks, delicate, faire, large plaines, sweet cristall fountaines, and cleare running streams that twine in fine meanders through the meads, making so sweete a murmuring noise to hear as lull the senses with delight asleepe, so pleasantly do they glide upon the pebble stones...."

The very words, "the bewty of the place," reveal the man; the style of the passage his Elizabethan attitudes. In later years, he was to celebrate his love of the American landscape in the rich, full-flowered English of an Elizabethan marriage song.

"If Art and Industry should doe as much
As Nature hath for Canaan not such,
Another place, for benefit and rest,
In all the universe can be possest.
The more we proove it by discovery,
The more delight each object to the eye
Procures as if the elements had here,
Bin reconciled, and pleased it should appeare
Like a faire virgin longing to be sped
And meete her lover...."

There were others at the plantation, however, who did not share these poetic raptures. As the summer wore away, furs proved scarce, and the severe New England winter enclosed the silent land, Wollaston began to lose faith in his venture. At the return of spring, he had made his decision; he would hold on to the trading post, leave a few men there to care for it,

and sell to planters in Virginia the time still due him from his bondsmen. A spring morning sees the two groups of “servants” bid each other farewell, and Wollaston’s ship pass from view of the trading post behind the wooded isles. And with his ship, Wollaston himself disappears, for there is no evidence that he ever returned to the shores of Boston Bay.

Thomas Morton, left behind in his beloved Canaan with five or six young English exiles, now assumed command of the trading post by the old Indian field; there was joy in Olympus, and the golden reign began.

IV

“There is a time for reaping and a time for sowing,” and for Thomas Morton a time for drinking the wine of life’s good pleasure. It is clear that the poet vagabond decided to enjoy life and, like Ecclesiastes, “prove his heart with mirth.” He had come to his years of philosophy, his path of life had led him to a glorious land, and a world of new adventures and impressions had cleansed from memory a past of tumult and bitterness. Master Shakespeare’s Forest of Arden was now his very own, and there was no enemy to be seen but winter and rough weather. This ripened desire to have joy of the good green earth took a characteristic and pleasant form,—the London advocate began to imagine himself as a genial host bidding his guests be merry, and sip their ale under the greenwood tree. This idea of himself presently took such a hold of the poet that he began to refer to himself as “Mine Host of Merry-Mount.”

For “Merry-Mount” it was; the name “Mount Wollaston” had gone by the board. Morton had christened the knoll at the head of the field “*Ma-re Mount*,” from the Latin noun meaning the sea, and he took an enormous pleasure in this ridiculous pun.

The golden reign on the Great Bay of the Massachusees! There was never a scarcity of food at the great log house on the knoll, for Morton was a keen sportsman, and soon taught his companions how to follow game. The country abounded in “turkies, which at divers times came in great flocks,” in venison and wild pigeons; the swift shadows of trout moved in every pool. “It was a noted custom at my House,” wrote my host, “to have every man’s duck upon a trencher.” There was wine to be had, probably purchased from trading vessels or distilled from the pagan New England

wild grape, “good *Rosa Solis*,” the Rose of the Sun, a blessed name for an old wine with the day’s glory in the grape. “Mine Host” even began the old sport of falconry. “At my first arrival in these parts,” said he, “I practiced to take a lanneret, which I reclaimed, trained, and made flying in a fortnight, the same being a passenger at Michaelmas.” An odd fragment of history, this young New England hawk sent over seas to fly some English field!

Rarest touch of all, none need remain sad at the Merry-Mount. At the field “there was a water, by mee discovered, most excellent for the cure of melancholly.”

Trade flourished. The Elizabethan spirit, for all its poetic quality, was practical enough, and Morton was no middle-aged carousing ass, or befuddled idler. He found the furs he wanted because he sought them out, and because he had a country-born instinct for the ways of the natural world, an English sportsman’s training, and a genial humanity wide enough to include the Indians as members of the human race.

Unhappy Indians of the Great Bay of the Massachusees! Some terrible and unknown plague had descended upon them in the winter of 1616-17, and almost destroyed them from off the earth. They were a broken people, wandering about the lands of the ancestors like the ghosts of their race. In April, 1623, on very slight provocation, Standish had “massacred” seven of their men in cold blood; the word is that used by Charles Francis Adams. As Cotton Mather observed with charity eighty years later, “the woods were almost cleared of these pernicious creatures to make room for a better growth.”

Such were the forlorn, quiet, and broken people who found an understanding friend in the poet host of Merry-Mount. Like any good scholar of his day, he thought them possibly the relics of the scattered Trojans! “I am bold to conclude,” begins Mine Host, “that the original of the natives of New England may well be conjectured to be from the scattered Trojans after such time as Brutus departed from Latium.” He would not sell them drink, for he pitied them, and, moreover, he was no man to want a drunken savage shattering the pleasant notes of an old English pipe with a primitive strain. He told them that wine was among the English “a sachem’s drink.” He could not discern the religious-mindedness others had noted in the redskins. “For my part,” declared Mine Host, “I am

more willing to believe that the Elephants (which are reported to be the most intelligible of all beasts) do worship the moon." "Poor, silly lambs," he called the dispossessed and unfortunate creatures when they came to lament over their old benefactor sitting ignominiously in the Puritan stocks.

Presently rumours arrive from Plymouth; the brethren look with anger at the Mount. Morton's five young exiled Englishmen are in their eyes, "a drunken and deboste crew"; Morton himself is the "lord of Misrule" maintaining a "school of atheism." This last is patently a gibe at Morton's religious affiliations. A stout churchman by temperament and conviction, Morton still held to the typical Elizabethan attitude that matters of religion were best decided by the great and the learned of the realm. In the good old Merry England days, for instance, Parliament had on several occasions re-defined the Deity and nobody had been a penny the worse.

Anger at Plymouth, where men are forbidden to rejoice at the ancient and beloved festival of Christmas, anger at Plymouth because there is merriment in the land as well as fear and stern repression, anger at Plymouth because the diligence and business shrewdness of the lawyer from Merry England has cut into their trade in furs. The shoe pinches, the shoe spiritual and the shoe worldly. Clouds begin to gather on the bright waters of the woodland bay.

The intense New England autumn comes with the first swift frost, the long winter follows, snow lies deep on the great field, and beyond the field, ice flats cover the bay to open water of the bitterest, coldest green. "The aire doth begett good stomacks," said Mine Host of Merry-Mount. In the log house on the knoll, so many worlds apart in spirit from the log house by shallow Plymouth Bay, fires leap merrily, ducks turn on the spits, pannikins of wine grow warm on the embers' edge; Morton sits with his hand over the arm of his chair, and strokes the head of his "dogge." The Forest of Arden it is, and winter no such dread enemy after all.

Then, with its strange passion and violence, arrives the New England spring. The country gentleman from England will show the "precise separatists" how in Merry England of Church and King, is freely kept an honest holiday. The first of May is approaching; he will go to the wood and find a tree worthy to be the first Maypole in New England! Such a one shall

brew a barrel of ale, and such one shall roll out the latest barrel of “good *Rosa Solis*” to the new born splendour of the sun!

The first of May in the year 1627, a fresh New England morning with the sky still cool and silvery blue, and the trees thrusting out little, cautious leaf tips “the size of a mouse’s ear.” Music in the greenwood, merry music with an honest tune, the old, sweet, human music one might hear in Master William Shakespeare’s comedies in London over the sea. As the light ripens over the tawny eastern marsh now interwoven with the faint emerald green of the new growth, and his good majesty the sun climbs into the bright New England air, “Mine Host” steps from his house of logs to proclaim an English holiday! Heigho, be jolly, under the greenwood tree, for icicles shall no more hang by the wall; it is the first of May!

The New England robins pipe, and cock their heads to one side as Mine Host reads his proclamation, and their piping dies in a great shout as the merry advocate completes the mock solemnity. Guests have already arrived, more are coming across the bay in their little boats, some are hastening to the Merry-Mount along the brambly woodland trails. The ever hungry crew from Wessagusset is at hand, stray planters arrived within the year, and perhaps the captain of a trading ship and his chorusing, sunburnt tars. One hears the music, the wholesome, natural gaiety, the knock of pewter mugs on wooden table tops, and men singing. To these exiles, the festival meant the first touch of home they had in the wilderness. That tall, soldier-like lad of Morton’s company, Tom Gibbons, will “get religion,” and end his days as a pillar of the Puritan state; little does he foresee such a change as he waves his pewter mug about! A health to Master Thomas Morton of the Merry-Mount, and a fig for all who doubt that laughter is the truest distinguishing mark twixt man and beast! “Mine Host” was well prepared, he had brewed a huge barrel of “excellent beare and provided a case of bottles, to be spent, with other good cheare for all comers of the day.”

Higher climbs the spring tide sun, lower sinks the good liquor in “barrell and botel”; it is time to sweep together up the knoll to the Maypole of New England!

The pole lay upon the ground, on the height of a knoll commanding the field and the sea. It was a noble pine mast, some eighty feet high, wreathed about with flowers and garlands of the New England spring, and

somewhere near the top of it, a fine pair of garlanded antlers served as a rustic crown. Amid a thousand, noisy, contradictory counsels the pole is raised, the gods alone know how, and now comes a young lad of Morton's company to sing the song the merry advocate has composed in honor of the day.

“Drinke and be merry, merry, merry boyes!
Let all your delight be in the Hymen's ioyes;
Io to Hymen, now the day is come
About the merry Maypole take a Roome.

Make greene garlons; bring bottles out
And fill sweet nectar freely about.
Uncover thy head and feare no harme,
For hers good liquor to keepe it warme.

Chorus: Then drinke and be merry!

Nectar is a thing assign'd
By the Deities owne minde
To cure the hart opprest with greif,
And of good liquors is the chiefe.

Chorus: Then drinke and be merry!

Give to the mellancolly man
A cup or two of't now and than;
This physic soone revive his bloud
And make him be of a merrier moode.

Chorus: Then drinke and be merry!

Give to the Nympe thats free from scorne,
No Irish stuff nor Scotch o'er worne,
Lasses in beaver coats come away
Ye shall be welcome to us night and day.”

There is a stir in the greenwood at the close of the song, and through the bushes come trooping the last of the Massachusees. Morton had not forgotten his Indian neighbors. Tall, naked, coppery warriors, and Indian lasses in beaverskin coats have arrived to share in the merriment of Merry-Mount. English planter and Indian brave join hands, Morton seizes the brown fingers of two tawny princesses; all join hands, and round and about the pole dance the fantastic company mid the wild uproar of a drunkenly beaten drum, shouts, the thunderous roar of old-fashioned muskets, and the faint silvery piping of an English melody. Is there a stranger picture in all American history than this revel at the Merry-Mount, this glimpse of tawny bodies, beaver coats, English sailors in great Dutch breeches, and Morton, in his London best?

Nailed to the Maypole itself was a festival poem which “being Enigmatically composed pusselled the Separatists most pittifully to expound it.”

At nightfall there must have been many a befuddled head, and on the following morn, a sizeable crew at the spring so efficacious against the “melancholly.” But serious business was in the air, for the scandalised brethren of Plymouth had resolved on action, and Miles Standish was soon to descend on the disturber of Israel. The merry advocate knew where the wind lay. “The setting up of this Maypole,” he wrote in later years, “was a lamentable spectacle to the precise separatists who lived at New Plimmouth. They termed it an Idoll, yea, the Calfe of Horeb, and stood at defiance with the place naming it Mount Dagon, threatning to make it a woeful mount and not a merry-mount.”

It was Morton’s custom to go to Wessagusset once in a while, as he says, “to have the benefit of company,” and there Standish found and secured him. That he did not secure the poet well enough is apparent from the fact that Thomas Morton of Cliffords Inn escaped that night from his captors, and made his way through a wild thunderstorm to his beloved Merry-Mount.

There was a tremendous to-do on finding that the “Lord of Misrule” had “flowne.” In “Mine Host’s” own words....

“The word which was given with an alarme, was,—o he’s gon!—he’s gon!—What shell wee doe, he’s gon!—the rest (halfe asleepe) start up in a

maze, and, like rames, ran their heads one at another at full butt in the darke. Their grand leader, Captaine Shrimpe, took on most furiously to see the empty nest and the bird gon. The rest were eager to have torne their haire from their heads; but it was so short that it would give them no hold.”

Standish, however, returned to the Merry-Mount for his prisoner. Some kind of judicial legerdemain took place at Plymouth, and Morton was sent to England as prisoner. The specific charge against him was the sale of firearms to the Indians. The arrest was illegal, the whole process and the imprisonment an outrageous injustice, and there is not a scrap of real evidence to show that there was a word of truth in the specific charge. On Morton’s arrival in England, the English authorities recognised the true state of affairs, and instantly released the prisoner.

It had been wisely observed that Puritanism is not so much a form of religion as an attitude to life, and that there are Puritan sects in Islam as well as in eastern and western Christianity. A meeting of the mind which comes into the world already “Puritan,” and the mind which is liberal by temperament has always meant a struggle, and the first named has never troubled to make a declaration of war, but has offered instant battle to his soul’s antagonist. Once victorious, the repressive type has shown no mercy to victims of its aggression. The story of the merry man of the Merry-Mount is the tale of such a challenge and such a defeat. His May day revel was no orgy of “beastlie practices” worthy of the “madd Bacchinalians,” nor did his verses “tend to lasciviousness”; it was simply an English country revel such as he must have often witnessed in his youth. And in historic justice to Morton, it ought to be remembered that the good fathers of Plymouth, ministering angels as they were beside the repressers at Boston, exemplified the “Puritan” attitude in every moment of their lives, that they had been difficult to deal with in England, and that they had on several occasions severely tried the tempers of their exceedingly tolerant hosts at Leyden. Theirs is a large documentation, and the facts are clear. Morton, moreover, suffered because he was a stray communicant of the Church of England. In his case Puritan antagonism for such as held a contrary attitude to life mingled with the *odium theologicum* to beget what began as injustice and ended as cruel persecution.

So ends the Maypole scene of the comedy. There was a sequel, for Morton returned. The beauty of the New England wilderness had stirred the heart of this vagabond country gentleman, and moreover, he had property and an investment to protect. During his stay in England, the Puritans under Endecott and Winthrop began the settlement of "the Great Bay of the Massachusees." What happened to the merry-maker when he fell into such hands is a tale for philosophers.

V

The Puritan settlement at Boston having been accomplished, the domain of Merry-Mount became part of the Puritan jurisdiction, and one of Endecott's first acts was to go to the Mount, cut down the Maypole, and admonish the forlorn little band "to look ther should be better walking." The surviving members of Morton's company had not been attracting attention in any way, and Endecott's visit was simply an outlet to the man's hunger to punish. He was presently, for a very minor offence, to cut off the ears of an unfortunate home-sick Englishman, a member of the Church of England, who had been so browbeaten by "the saints" that he was half a madman. One of the saints in England ventured to send a warning to the New England brethren that there were already "diverse complaintes against the severity of your government, especially Mr. Indicutts, and that he shall be sent for over, about cutting off the Lunatick man's ears."

This thin-lipped man, with the icy and merciless eyes,—his portrait may be seen on the walls of the Massachusetts Historical Society,—was presently to judge the "Lord of Misrule." For Thomas Morton was once more in his "Canaan." While in London, he had been of service to Isaac Allerton, an agent of Plymouth Colony, and Allerton had outraged Plymouth by bringing back the disturber. There is still something mysterious about this return with Allerton; it may be that Morton arranged it for the sake of its irony.

From Plymouth, Morton went boldly to his property at the Merry-Mount, and with great courage ventured to brave the Puritan tyranny. At a general court in Salem, he very rightly refused to sign some hodgepodge of the Mosaic law and English custom which the saints intended as a kind of constitution, making his assent conditional on the addition of the words,

—“So as nothing be done contrary or repugnant to the laws of the Kingdom of England.”

The refusal marked him for destruction. Now comes his arrest and trial on the most trivial of charges; he had, so the saints protested, “taken away a canoe from some Indians.” A delightful touch of Puritan love for the redskin. “Charges,” wrote Mr. Charles Francis Adams, who was no partisan of Morton’s, “which amount to absolutely nothing.” What chance had this English gentleman, who knew himself to be a subject of King Charles and whose soul was still a subject of Elizabeth, in this court composed of seventeenth century Englishmen labouring under the extraordinary delusion that they were primitive Jews of the Arabian desert? Once more the man of Cliffords was condemned, set in the stocks, his property confiscated, and he was sent to England penniless and half-starved for lack of money to buy food.

Nothing can excuse this brutal, inhuman, and lawless condemnation. Now comes a typical Puritan touch of vindictiveness. His persecutors waited till the vessel carrying Morton to England came in sight of Merry-Mount, and then set the house at the Mount afire, so that their victim might see the destruction of his property. “That the habitation of the wicked appear no more in Israel” wrote Winthrop sententiously. Was there ever anything more heartless?

Poor “Mine Host” of the festal Maypole! “The smoake that did ascend,” said he, “appeared to be the very sacrifice of Kain. Mine Host (that a farre of aboutd a ship did there behold this woeful spectacle) knew not what he should doe in this extremity but beare and forbeare as Epectetus says: it was bootless to exclaime.... The stumpes and postes in their black livery will mourne.” And he cried, “Cruell Schismaticks!”

A campaign of slander now followed the violence, and it was whispered about that the Lord of Misrule had been sent for on “a foule suspition of murther.” There is no trace of any warrant, there is no trace of crime committed by Morton; the one actual fact is that the English authorities again delivered the prisoner. The source of the libel has recently been uncovered; it was the pretty thought of Morton’s delightful stepson! As Morton continued to live in England quite unmolested, though with a vindictive enemy at his heels, it may be safely said that the whole

slandrous attack was a pure fabrication. Tested in England, the scene of the supposed high crimes and misdemeanours, the slanderous charges evaporate into unlovely wisps of Puritan malice and the imagination of a blackguard being sued by his sister for withholding her marriage portion.

Years pass, the last of Elizabeth's Merry England melts away, Oberon and Titania forsake the moonlit glade, and a sullen and apprehensive England rises against its Stuart king. An old man in his seventies watches the tumult, his eyes full of memories. Far away from the storm, over the wide Atlantic, lies new Canaan where the sun itself is like *Rosa Solis*, where the tawny braves walk the trails of the greenwood, the sea birds feed by the marsh, and the plover rises piping from the grass. His Forest of Arden! And Merry-Mount is there where he played Mine Host, raised the antlered Maypole, and proclaimed an English holiday. He will return there again with his "dogge" and fowling piece; he is old now, and even the Puritan magistrate will be content to let him spend his old age roaming the fields. Little he knew the Puritan mind!

In the summer of 1643, he lands at Plymouth; one party is in favor of handing him over at once to the Boston magistrates; Governor Bradford, however, himself along in years, will suffer him to spend the winter in the Plymouth jurisdiction. The next spring, in compliance with this condition, the old man leaves Plymouth, and travels about; he goes to Rhode Island and to Maine. As he goes, Endecott watches him like a hawk. There comes some unlucky slip, a moment's entrance, perhaps, into the Massachusetts jurisdiction; the warrant is already at hand, and the old Lord of Misrule is once more in the hands of his old persecutor. Again he was brought to trial before Winthrop and Endecott. On trial for what? For having, in England, "made a complaint against us at the council board." How a criminal offence could be manufactured out of an English subject's proper appeal to the head of the state did not worry Winthrop or his fellow casuists. They were both the law and the judges of the law. Some of the "evidence" had been collected by Winthrop's pretty trick of opening his opponents' letters.

Owing to Morton's being "old and crazy," wrote Winthrop, "we thought not fit to inflict corporal punishment on him but thought better to fine him." What a smug air of self-approval there is in this phrase! It has not been hidden from impartial history, however, the other side of the story. Winthrop and Endecott actually kept the broken old man in prison a year,

and caused him to pass through the bitterness of a New England winter without a fire, without bedding, and with fetters on his limbs.

Regaining his liberty only after a piteous plea, he made his way to the little royalist colony at Agamenticus in Maine. Let us hope there were some good souls about to welcome and understand the poet of Merry-Mount.

Two years at Agamenticus, the hill seen afar over the sea as a high blue dome; two years among friendly folk, and then Morton of Merry-Mount wanders from earth to the Elysian fields where Good Queen Bess still reigns, and Shakespeare and Ben Jonson dwell, and no man strives to shape into some petty human scheme the mighty purposes of the Lords of Life.

In *Cyrano de Bergerac*, De Guiche and Cyrano discuss Don Quixote's famous battle with the wind mills. "Beware of such a battle," says De Guiche; "you will be hurled into the mire." And Cyrano replies—"Or upwards to the stars."

***Five:* JAMES BRUCE**

Five: JAMES BRUCE

I

A tall, broad-shouldered, powerful man, a man six feet four inches in height, sitting on “the largest horse ever seen in Scotland.” “Mr. Bruce ... is the tallest man you ever saw gratis,” said laughing Fanny Burney. Not a colossus or a Hercules like Belzoni, but a kind of eighteenth-century adult Olympian quite aware of the prestige of height and fine carriage, with the tolerant and humorous eye of an observer of life, and something of the pride and composure of a well-born Scottish gentleman.

The children of the folk who lived upon his estate used to stare at the huge man on the giant black horse. Their fathers had told them that the laird had visited the strangest kingdom in all the world, and that he had loved a great queen who was fair as the lady of Sheba in the Bible, and wore a golden crown. Sometimes at the “great house,” he would sit for hours in a chair, clad in magnificent robes, and the serving folk would whisper among themselves that the master was thinking of the old days and the great queen.

Sometime in the middle years of the eighteenth century, an extraordinary letter arrived at the house of His Majesty’s Prime Minister. It was addressed to “Mr. Pitt, Vizir of England”; its sender was the Dey of Algiers, and its message was terse and to the point. “Your consul in Algiers,” said the missive, “is an obstinate person and like an animal.” “Dear me,” said Mr. Pitt, “who is His Majesty’s consul at Algiers?”

A look at some great ledger, full of the brim of clerkly penmanship, and a question or two among the staff, soon elicited an answer. The consul at Algiers was Mr. James Bruce, a young Scot of excellent family, who had been recommended to the post by the honourable Lord Halifax. This young man was the son of David Bruce of Kinnaird in Stirlingshire, he had had an English education from tutors in London and at Harrow school, and he was interested in travel and archæological research. “Humph,” says Mr. Pitt, “anything else.” Yes, there was more to the story; he had married the daughter of a prosperous London wine merchant, taken over the business

and then resigned it to his brother on the death of his wife scarce a year after the marriage. He had travelled in Spain, studied Arabic at the Escorial, was said to be “extremely good tempered and a good scholar.” And here was the Dey of Algiers saying that he was “like an animal.”



JAMES BRUCE

The angry phrase of the Dey, however, was quite natural. As master of a piratic kingdom cravenly humoured by the European powers, he had grown accustomed to obedience of the most servile kind from all Christians resident in his territories. If there is one supremely discreditable episode in the history of what is ironically called Western Christendom, it is surely this matter of the relations of the European powers and the Barbary pirates. Great European nations faint-heartedly directed their consuls to submit to incredible degradations,—the French consul in Bruce's time had been loaded with fetters and harnessed to a cart for venturing to protest at some exaction, and another consul with gouty feet threatened with the bastinado—many thousands of unhappy European sailors were allowed to pass into the living death of Moorish slavery, and the cut-throat authors of these outrages timidly flattered and paid. The bare historical account does not tell the story; the reality of it is a ship's crew of weary, thirsty and cruelly-beaten men standing fettered in the white glare of the Algerian sun, hearing "Christian dog" hurled at them like a stone meant to wound.

With the arrival of his British Majesty's new consul, Mr. James Bruce of Stirlingshire, a brave spirit had appeared in this world of fatuous pusillanimity. The tall, composed Scot was decidedly not the man who would submit to degradation or any filthy foolery. When he had to fight, he fought, whether the case in hand was the rescue of some poor tar from his Moorish chains, or the protection of some minor official of the consulate. His composure and good humour,—there is a kind of good humour secretly rooted in the quality of courage—discomfited his pirate neighbours, for they knew that he knew that his life was in danger. The ferocious old shark of a Dey, being thus put out, had then addressed his complaint to the "Vizir" of England.

History does not record what Mr. Pitt did or said on this occasion, but it does mention that the tall consul who annoyed the Dey of Algiers by looking him squarely in the eye decided to waste no more time among these uninteresting sea jackals and slavers. He had taken the post of Algiers, not because he sought the haven of political office, but because he hoped to make his position a passport to North Africa. There were Roman ruins about, in Bruce's own words "the large and magnificent remains of ruined architecture ... of exquisite elegance and perfection" and Bruce was a true son of a century that went in for ruins and elegance.

Now comes his resignation from the post at Algiers and his appearance in a new rôle. He will roam the coast in the character of an itinerant Christian physician, a dervish of the art of healing. At Algiers he had prevailed upon the naval surgeon attached to the Consulate to teach him a little eighteenth century medicine, and had been quite successful with his “purgings, vomitings and bleedings.” This quasi-knowledge was to be of the greatest use to him in after life. “I flatter myself,” said he, “no offence, I hope, I did not occasion a greater mortality among the Mohametans and Pagans abroad than may be attributed to some of my brother physicians among their fellow Christians.” When the parson of the Consulate left, he took on the marrying and baptising.

In 1765, the year of his resignation from his post at Algiers, this paragon of consuls was thirty-five years old. He had some resources of his own, he was alone in life, and he had seen just enough of the world to make him wish to see more. A thirst for travel, like appetite, grows with indulgence. The mental fire driving him to his future of extraordinary adventure was an intellectual curiosity, and as one reads his own account of his vagabondage, one feels that he was far more interested in the human world than in the natural. He wanted to see people and events, and he went to strange countries because events and people there would be supremely worth while. This point of view again is decidedly of the eighteenth century. Just now, however, Roman ruins are on his mind, and he is gathering together an expedition.

A notion suddenly checks him. The Dey has resented his demeanour, and may possibly take revenge by refusing him an authorisation to go about in his dominions. And now a great surprise, for presently an obsequious official comes from the Dey bringing passes and an authorisation whose like had never before been issued to a foreigner, and a pair of “presents.” The presents are two grinning, good-natured young Irishmen, who stand in the courtyard clad in the scanty rags tossed to Christian slaves, and with the usual chains upon their legs. These young Celts, deserters from the Royal Navy to the Spanish service, had been captured and enslaved by the Algerians.

What can such an excess of benevolence mean? Little by little the story comes to Bruce’s ears; the old Dey has secretly admired his courage all the while.

The autumn of the year finds the antiquarian “dervish,” sketch-book in “hand, wandering off into the interior of the Barbary States”; he explores the dry, treeless mountain land of North Africa searching for temples and ruins, he ventures to the edge of the desert and sketches the Roman columns of some dead city overwhelmed by time, silence and sand. One pictures the antiquarian expedition led by this composed Olympian Scot, with a rich sense of humour lying half hid in a keenly intelligent eye, the cavalcade consisting of the Irish sailors, a young Italian architectural draughtsman, one Luigi Balugani, and Moorish attendants.

A classical column or a Roman shrine, suddenly seen through village palms, brings all to a halt, quiet descends, pencils flourish busily, measurements are taken; then follows the papery snap of a closing sketch-book, a stir of hoofs, a variety of equine snorts, and off goes the sometime consul of the eighteenth century in search of more antique “magnificence.”

At El Djem, the huge amphitheatre which is larger than the colosseum at Rome, had just had “two sections” blown to pieces to prevent its being used as a fortress by marauding tribes. A rumour stirred the camp, a rumour of a petrified Roman city with “petrified men and horses, women at the churn, the little children, the cats, the dogs, and the mice.” A romantic tale; indeed, it was all romance!

At Tunis the expedition gathered in one Osman, a “French renegade,” “very brave,” says Bruce, “but he needed a sharp lookout that he did not often embroil us where there was access to women or to wine.”

“I believe I may confidently say,” wrote Bruce, “that there is not either in the territories of Algiers or Tunis a fragment of good taste of which I have not brought a drawing to Britain.”

Adventure by sea now awaited this cultural cavalcade. Arriving at Ptolemais, a small port of Tripolitania, the whole muster of Moors, sailors, and attendants took passage on a small Greek junk bound for Crete. The African littoral being in the grip of a famine, the ship had arrived from Crete with a cargo of corn. Returning to Crete, a storm presently gathered up the vessel, and wrecked her on the Libyan shoals. Bruce swam ashore, and falling into the hands of Arabs who had come to plunder the wreck, was stripped naked, and beaten. Painfully hurt, and ignorant of the fate of his goods and his company, he took refuge from the continuing storm in the lee

of bush. In the morning an old man and a number of young men came up to where he was sitting. Then Bruce:

“I gave them the salute *Salam alicum!* which was only returned by one young man in a tone as if he wondered at my impudence. The old man then asked me Whether I was a Turk, and what I had to do there? I replied I was no Turk, but a poor Christian physician, a dervish that went about the world seeking to do good for God’s sake, and was then flying from famine and going to Greece to get bread. He then asked me if I was a Cretan? I said I had never been in Crete, but came from Tunis, and was returning to that town, having lost everything I had in the shipwreck of that vessel. I said this in so despairing a tone that there was no doubt left with the Arabs that the fact was true. A ragged, dirty barracan was immediately thrown over me and I was ordered up to a tent in the end of which stood a long spear thrust through it, a mark of sovereignty.”

Little by little the company and even the baggage come to light. The wanderings begin again; they become confused and difficult to follow; the tall Scot is acquiring a touch of the true vagabond mind; one now finds him roaming everywhere, ruin or no ruin. The sailors are sent home; the company drops away; his young Italian architectural draughtsman, Luigi Balugani, is now with Bruce, now waiting in some end-of-the-world town for his return.

Somewhere in Northern Africa he encounters a tribe who eat lions, and shares their repast. “The first was a he-lion, smelling violently of musk.... I then had a lion’s whelp six or seven months old; it tasted on the whole the worst of the three.”

In Egypt he ascended the Nile, fought off bandits in the Valley of the Kings, made friends with Ali Bey, governor of Egypt, and his Vizir, a Copt given to astrology. His fame as wandering Christian physician had opened the door, for Moslem rulers in the eighteenth century were as eager to have Christian physicians as Christian rulers were to have Moslem physicians in the twelfth. A case of telescopes, to which he clung with a true Scot’s persistence, won for him the special standing of an astrologer. As a reward for treating Ali Bey, the governor obtained from Constantinople a kind of supreme *laissez passer*, “a firman of the Grand Signor wrapped up in green taffeta, magnificently written and titled and the inscription powdered with

gold dust.” Ali Bey also gave him a letter to Ras Michael, lord of Abyssinia.

The western coast of the Red Sea is a thing of lifeless burning rock and glaring beaches of blazing white sand; in the eighteenth century the region was still nominally a part of the Turkish Empire, and Turkish officials dwelt in the coral houses, and waddled to the beach to plunder travellers standing bewildered in the apocalyptic sun. In 1769, a tall man arrived who looked his would-be plunderers in the face, and even managed to awe them with his letter from the “Grand Signor” with its powder of gold. This gentleman was the Laird of Kinnaird, for His Majesty’s late consul at Algiers had succeeded to the paternal estate. The Laird of Kinnaird seeing the world as a Frankish dervish! Balugani, the draughtsman, was still with him; the young artist must have been something of a man.

“The noblest of all occupations,” wrote Bruce in later times, “is that of exploring the distant parts of the Globe.” The Laird of Kinnaird was on his way to perhaps the most inaccessible country of his world, a land forgotten for five hundred years in the forests of Africa. Mr. Bruce had determined to reach the Kingdom of Abyssinia.

II

The forest kingdom of Abyssinia lies on a high and isolated plateau lifted above the tropical greenery of equatorial Africa; its slopes are steep, and its approaches mountainous and difficult. Once arrived on the heights, the traveller finds himself on a kind of land island with its own temperature, mountain-top climate, its own forest bred of the strange union of the fierce equatorial sun and the cool heights, and its own island people dwelling aloof in space and time. Though dark skinned, these folk are not negroes, but some Hamitic folk with a strong infusion of Jewish blood.

Their kingdom is one of the oldest in the world; their rulers claim descent from a son of Solomon and the queen of Sheba. Converted centuries ago from primitive Judaism to the Christianity of the African mind, this singular mingling of the testaments under the sun of Africa produced a kind of Jewish Christianity unique in the Christian world.

A forest land spread over mountains, a land thronged with black folk carrying burdens through mountain jungles, a land of lions roaring in the night, a land of spring rains and flooded water courses, a land of great feudal nobles clad in bright robes and riding with bare feet in the stirrup, a land of Biblical blood justice, Christian wonder-workings, wars and rumours of wars, a land whose sun beat through trees like a vast and terrible white sword, a land where almost the first thing seen by Bruce was the stuffed skin of a malefactor swinging from a tree.

The Laird of Kinnaird had arrived at the court of Saul, King of Israel. It was all there, the battles, the adventure, the death, the colour, and the cruelty. The head of the state was Ras Michael, governor of Tigre, the seventy-year-old soldier and intriguer who had assassinated one king, poisoned another and was now ruling in the name of a third. Like men coming one after the other to try a feat of strength, great feudal nobles and confederacies gathered together to thrust him from power; there were constant battles and new confederacies, and then the slinking hyenas carrying off human carrion in the night of forest shadows, brilliant stars and the odour of the battlefield. And in the morning priests, who wore the robes of the priests of Solomon, marching in company to sacrifice to the Sun.

The journey from the coast to Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia, took Bruce and his young Italian companion ninety-five days. Both made the journey wearing white Moorish robes.

Save for three Franciscan friars, of whose fate nothing is known, and of a certain French surgeon, no European had been seen in Abyssinia for close upon two hundred years. Bruce's arrival had a decidedly dramatic quality. An epidemic of the smallpox had fallen upon the land; the nobles lay dying; the great houses trembled for their sons. Suddenly at the end of the caravan road had appeared the tall Laird of Kinnaird in his character of an observer and wandering physician.

A European and a wise man in their midst! It is the finger of Heaven! An attendant comes begging him to visit Ras Michael's son, the young warrior Ayto Consu, who is dying of the plague.

Into the great dark den of the African palace walks the tall man who looked the Dey of Algiers squarely in the eye; he hears uneasy breathing in the half-darkness, and sees a magnificent youth tossing about on a bed of

animal skins. A woman of extraordinary beauty and stateliness approaches; it is the Ozoro Esther, old Ras Michael's young wife, and young mother of the warrior lad. This Biblical queen, this great lady of the ancient court of Israel, was to be Bruce's unfailing friend and kind protectress.

Bruce opens the doors and windows, fumigates the rooms with incense and myrrh, and washes them with vinegar and warm water. The young prince passes the crisis of the plague, and lives.

The incident gives Bruce a name and a place. He is no longer the unknown European, but Yagoube, which is James,—Yagoube the physician, counsellor, and spring of secret wisdom. Slaves bring him new and clean clothes in the fashion of Gondar the capital. "My hair was cut round, curled and perfumed in the Amharic fashion, and I was thenceforward in all outward appearance a perfect Abyssinian." From this day on, he will be a noble of the Abyssinians, he will ride with them, surprise them with his marksmanship, and follow them to battle with the wild, half-negro tribes.

He found the rôle of physician counsellor a congenial one, and carried it through with the best of humour. He thus described his visit to a young Abyssinian princess; the account and the humour of it are very characteristic of the man.

"The young patient being brought forward, soon after, one of the slaves, her attendant as in a play, pulled off the remaining part of the veil that covered her. I was astonished at the sight of so much beauty ... the rest of her dress was a blue shift which hung loosely about her and covered her down to her feet, though it was not very rigorously nor very closely disposed all below her neck. She was the tallest of the middle size, and not yet fifteen years of age, her whole features faultless.... Such was the beautiful Aiscach, daughter of the eldest of the ladies I was then attending.

"If Aiscach was ill," said her mother, "you would take better care of her than of either of us." "Pardon me," said I, "Madam, if the beautiful Aiscach was ill, I feel I should myself be so much affected as not to be able to attend her at all!"

A scuffle with a kinsman of Ras Michael's led to a feat which became the talk of Abyssinia.

In the king's house, Bruce sat discussing the merits of gunnery with Guebra Mascal, a kinsman of the royal house. The Abyssinian, somewhat the worse for drink, took exception to something Bruce had said.

"He said I was a Frank and a liar," Bruce recounted, "and on my immediately rising up, he gave me a kick with his foot. I was quite blind with passion, seized him by the throat, and threw him on the ground, stout as he was." Guebra Mascal then wounded Yagoube slightly with his knife, but the giant Scot wrested the knife from his antagonist and beat him with the handle.

Any disorder in the king's house being punishable by death, all present felt uneasy. Steps were taken to hush up the incident, but in some manner the story reached the ears of the king. The Abyssinian, as the aggressor, was summoned to the throne.

"What sort of behaviour is this my men have adopted with strangers?" cried the king. "And with *my* stranger, too, and in the king's palace.... What! am I dead? or become incapable of governing longer?"

Matters seemed about to take an ill turn. At this Bruce became alarmed, for he was as generous spirited as he was courageous. Hastening to the palace, he pleaded with the offended king for the life of Guebra Mascal, and managed to save his life; yet the man long remained his bitter enemy.

The king, however, apparently continued to ponder on the affair, for presently he sent for the tall physician.

"Yagoube," said the king, "did you soberly say to Guebra Mascal that an end of a tallow candle, in a gun in your hand, would do more execution than an iron bullet in his?"

Said Bruce—"Will piercing the table on which your dinner is served (it was of sycamore, about three-quarters of an inch thick) at the length of this room be deemed a sufficient proof of what I advanced?"

"Ah, Yagoube," said the king, "take care what you say."

Now follows an odd scene. Yagoube the stranger calls for a gun, and under the eagerly curious eye of the king and some attendants loads it with half of "a farthing candle." Slaves then bring forth three stout battle shields of toughest and thickest bull hide, and set them one behind the other. One

feels the incredulity, the sense of something miraculous about to happen, even the little touch of awe.

Now comes quiet, the aiming of the gun, a crash, and a palace room full of pungent powder smoke. Yagoube's half of a farthing candle has pierced all three shields. Then comes the turning on its side of the royal table, and another roar; the candle has passed through the table top!

The principle involved is a simple matter of physics, but such learning of the devil had not yet arrived in Abyssinia. The prestige which Yagoube's height, composed manner, and well-born air had already won for him was enormously increased. The old Ras presently heard of it, and begged the tall physician to repeat his miracle. "Magic!" said the Abyssinian priests, yet bore their guest no ill will; the exploit was visible proof of the world by which they lived.

Bruce now brought to light the mission which had really led him to Abyssinia. He was in search of the source of the Blue Nile, the true Nile of the ancients. The other half of the mystery, the source of the White Nile, the Nile of the inundations, apparently did not stir the eighteenth century mind, and it was not till 1856, when Burton and Speke arrived at the great Nyanza lakes, that the true source of the floods became known to modern Europeans. There is interesting evidence that the Romans possessed the secret, for Nero sent "two centurions" up the river, who returned with the report that it arose amid "great lakes."

Yagoube's notion of "going to see a river and a bog, no part of which he could take away" seemed incomprehensible to his hosts, and they were very loath to let him go into the wild, half-hostile hinterland. Coming to some realisation that his friend's wish to reach the ancient river was the ambition of his life, the king solemnly invested Yagoube Bruce, the Laird of Kinnaird, with the feudal overlordship of the district of Geesh in which the springs of the Nile arose.

The road between the capital and his fief was a dangerous one, for it wound through the territories of a quasi-independent native prince named Fasil, and this prince was hostile to the then rulers of Abyssinia. Would not Yagoube, their friend, remain with them in the safety of the capital? Bruce, however, rose to the challenge to his courage and resolution.

Now comes an encounter with Fasil, and the refusal of the chieftain to let the laird pass. But Yagoube wins in the end, by captivating the savage with feats of gunnery and horsemanship. Presently Fasil, completely won, brings Bruce a present of a fine, loose, muslin garment fit for an African lord, and a handsome grey horse.

“Take this horse,” said the chieftain; “do not mount it, but drive it before you, saddled and bridled as it is.”

On into the forest goes the tall laird; the savages flee before the chief’s horse, and fall down before it. On the second of November, 1770, James Bruce arrives at the Blue Nile.

He stood on the brink of a steep hill, and saw the springs of the river below, and the river flowing away as a brook that had “scarcely water to turn a mill.” Hurrying pell-mell down the steep hillside, and falling twice as he ran, Bruce “the Abyssinian” reached the welling flood. In his hand he carried a large coconut shell which he had carried with him from Arabia, and this he filled with Nile water, and tossed off to the health of King George.

“I was arrived at the source of the Nile,” he wrote, “through numberless dangers and sufferings the least of which would have overwhelmed me but for the continual goodness and protection of Providence. I was, however, but then half through my journey, and all those dangers which I had already passed awaited me again on my return. I found a despondency gaining ground fast upon me, and blasting the crown of laurels I had too rashly woven for myself.”

III

While in Abyssinia, Bruce observed a certain extraordinary custom. Had he forgotten to mention this custom in the volumes of travel he later published, he would have done well, for his description of the custom did more to brand him as a marvel monger than all the rest of the fantastic realities set down in his careful and accurate history of his Abyssinian years.

This custom was eating of raw flesh from the living animal.

Bruce had attended the great banquets of raw bullock meat,—exactly such banquets are served today in the halls of Abyssinia’s present ruler, Ras Tafari—but he was unfamiliar with the eating of living flesh. Chancing one day to be riding down a forest road, he encountered two peasants driving a cow ahead of them. Presently, they became hungry, and Bruce saw a strange thing. Throwing the cow down, and trussing her securely, Bruce saw the natives feel the flesh along the backbone with their fingers, select a place, cut a square flap with a sharp knife, lift up this flap of hide, and cut themselves a square of living steak. This done, they put back the flap of hide in place, and tied it down with vegetable fibres. After their meal they drove the animal on ahead of them down the road.

Bruce questioned the men, and asked questions about the matter at the capital, but was told that he had seen nothing unusual.

On his return to Gondar from his expedition to the Nile, he found the kingdom once more in feudal disorder; enemies of Ras Michael were gathering their retainers, and the wild Galla tribes had been enlisted in the fray. The roar of battle and the thunder of charging horsemen shake the forest land, corpses of traitors and suspected folk hang on all the trees, the Abyssinian city reeks of death, and at night Bruce is troubled by hyenas dragging human carrion into the courtyard of his house. The court goes to battle, and Bruce goes with it to the great African plain by Gondar. Horsemen gathering by thousands and ten thousands stir the dust of the field to a tawny cloud, and in the haze their breastplates and lances catch the sun.

How completely Biblical is this fragment from Bruce’s account of the battle! “The first person that appeared was Kesla Yasous, and the horse with him, stretching out his hand (his face being all besmeared with blood for he was wounded in his forehead) he cried as loud as he could, ‘Stand firm, the king is safe in the valley!’”

The struggle ends in the crushing defeat of Ras Michael, the wild Galla tribes pour into Gondar, and the old Ruler goes to his palace to await the end. Alone in the turmoil, but master of himself and unconfused, Yagoube, the tall Scot, makes his way to the deserted palace of the once all powerful lord of Abyssinia.

The lives of vagabonds are full of romantic scenes, but there are few which so stir the imagination as the last meeting of the Laird of Kinnaird and the able, despotic old man who held kings in the hollow of his hand. The forest city was still; the great warriors with the mystical names,—Heart of Christ, Servant of the Holy Ghost, Shield of Jesus, were dead; the people waited to hear the war cries of the victorious factions in the streets. Bruce entered the palace unchallenged by a sentry. The throne room was “hung with mirrors brought at great expense from Venice by way of Arabia and the Red Sea; they were mostly broken; their copper gilt frames had been made by some Greek filigrane workers from Cairo.” And in this empty room of the broken mirrors, magnificently clad in his robes of scarlet and heavy golden thread, and throned in the seat of power, sat old Ras Michael silently waiting the arrival of his murderers.

The next morning, Galla savages occupied the palace, and Bruce saw them grimacing into the mirrors, breaking them, and grinding them to powder. Ras Michael had been led away. None could tell Bruce of the fate of Ozoro Esther.

One feels the approaching close of a drama. His old friends dead or in exile, the court dispersed, and himself heavily in debt, Bruce presently sought permission to leave Abyssinia. The new rulers were well disposed to him, and he might have stayed on, and retained his honours, but his world had been too violently re-made, and the European in him had awakened. Poor young Balugani had died of dysentery; the long and perilous journey home would have to be made alone.

The permission to depart was given unwillingly, and only after repeated entreaty. Once more the Abyssinian forest gathers the laird and his native escort into its greenery.

Suddenly Bruce sees another cavalcade approaching through the leafy quiet, and from the dress of the riders knows them to be nobles of the land. Are they partisans of the victors riding forth to visit the new lands they have been given, or friends of the old kingdom riding to silence and exile? The tall laird suddenly reins in his horse with a start,—the cavalcade is the train of Ozoro Esther. This meeting in the forest was the last sight tall Yagoube had of his Biblical queen.

Ozoro Esther! Bruce remembered the day when she rose from beside Ayto Consu's bed of sickness, and turned to him, superb in her dark and stately beauty. "But now," she had said, "if I am not as good a friend to Yagoube who saved my children as I am a steady enemy to the Galla,—then say Esther is not a Christian, and I forgive you." The great lady of the palace of the broken mirrors was on her way to Jerusalem to pray for Ras Michael.

"The troops of Begemder have taken away my husband, Ras Michael, God knows where," said she.

A romantic episode enough, this meeting in the wood, yet it ends in a lighter key. Tecla Miriam, a young noblewoman who had chosen to follow the beautiful Ozoro, turned to Yagoube with a jest. The tall Scot seems to have been a favourite with the ladies.

"But tell me truly, Yagoube," said Tecla Miriam, "you that know everything while peering and poring through those long glasses, did you not learn by the stars that we were to meet you here?"

"Madam," answered the laird, "if there was one star in the firmament that had announced to me such agreeable news, I should have relapsed into the old idolatry of this country, and worshipped that star for the rest of my life."

Instead of returning to Europe by the caravan route to the ports of the Red Sea, Bruce was on his way down the west slope of the Abyssinian plateau. At the foot of the wooded mountain slope lay the desert country of Senaar, and at the edge of the desert lay the Nile. The way proved long and dangerous. A simoon half smothered Bruce and his faithful Abyssinian followers, a scoundrelly Arab sheikh abused them and would have cut their throats and robbed them, and finally the camels began to die.

In order to save his notes, his observations and his scientific instruments, Bruce dismounted, and trudged the sand. "In this whole desert," he wrote, "there is neither worm, fly, nor anything that has the breath of life.... My face was so swelled as scarcely to permit me to see, my neck covered with blisters, my feet swelled and inflamed and bleeding with many wounds."

Now came a water shortage, and Bruce and his followers killed two camels to drink the camel water stored in their bodies. "We drew four gallons of camel water," runs the account; "it was indeed vapid and of a

bluish cast, but had neither taste nor smell.” Their strength still continuing to fail (Bruce had “three large wounds on the right foot, and two large wounds on the left which continued open”) they determined to save their lives by throwing away the quadrant, telescopes, and time-keeper and ride the camels alternately.

On the 28th of November they consumed the last of their black bread and dirty water, and at seven o’clock in the morning they saw the distant roofs of Egyptian Assouan. At a quarter to ten, on the 29th of November, 1772, James Bruce, Laird of Kinnaird, and late Lord of Geesh in Abyssinia, “arrived in a grove of palm trees” by the Nile. Here friendly souls helped him, and he even regained his abandoned goods.

IV

The strange things that befall vagabonds on their return! The Laird of Kinnaird found himself a rich man on his arrival in Stirlingshire. Coal had been discovered on his properties.

A Scots laird and a travelled gentleman riding about his property on that largest horse ever seen in Scotland, marrying again and happily, and bringing up a family. He must have often wondered what became of all the great folk to whom he had once been Yagoube the counsellor. Ras Michael, —what of him? Did he ever know that the old man fought his way back to power, and died still holding the kingdom in his hand? And Ayto Consu, the young prince with whom he had sworn eternal friendship in the Abyssinian phrase—“by the heart of an elephant”? And Ozoro Esther whom he had last seen in the forest going to Jerusalem to pray for Ras Michael, taken from her by the troops of Begemder?

His story, when he came to tell it, was but half believed. The fierce, magnificent, passionate revelation offended the eighteenth century mind. What had a century of laces, gallantry and candles, a century trying to live by something known as “reason,” to do with this kingdom of the old, dark deities? The offence to the spirit of the age presently bred a spirit of denial. “Pshaw,” said the bewigged gentleman, “but does the dog think to fool us all with his Abyssinian folderol?” Even wise old Johnson took sides against “the Abyssinian.” It was “Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia” against the reality.

The episode of the repast of living flesh became a thing of derision. Lord This refused to believe it; Lady That shuddered prettily, the coffee house wits wrote mocking poetry.

“Nor have I been where men, (what loss, alas!)
Kill half a cow, and turn the rest to grass.”

sang that dull rhymester Peter Pindar, in a tedious epistle to Bruce full of a stay-at-home’s easy jocosity. Bruce’s one official honour was a presentation to the king; all other possible glories sank from view in a rising tide of offended disbelief.

A lesser man, a man less able to see life as a whole, would have borne the world a sour grudge. Not so the Laird of Kinnaird. He lived out his years in good temper and unshaken composure. But in his later portraits there is a look which tells the whole story of his attitude to the polite world of disbelievers; the words can almost be heard—words not said angrily or sneeringly, but with well-founded and humorous conviction—“what incredible fools!”

***Six:* ARTHUR RIMBAUD**

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I

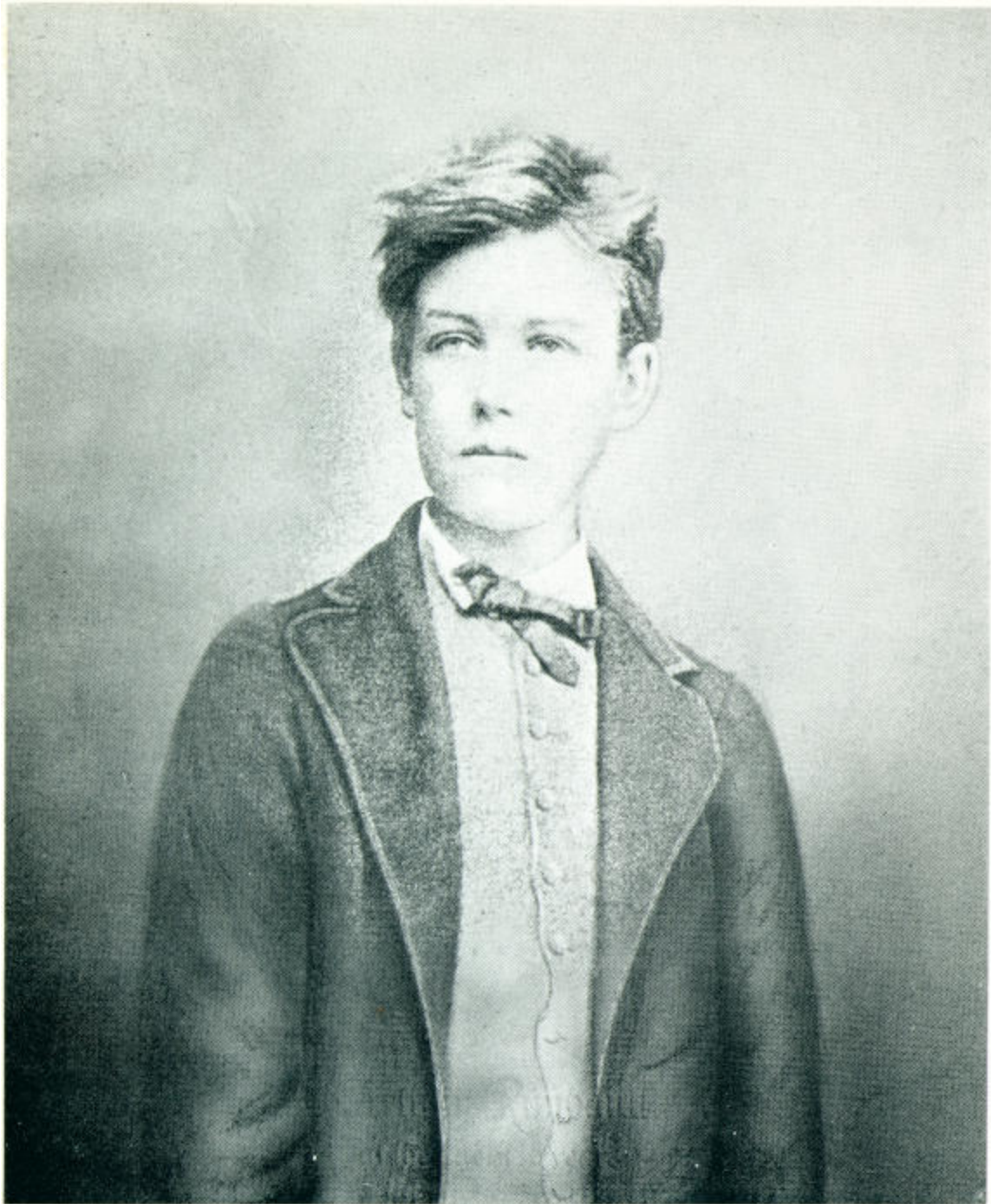
In the Paris of the late eighties, when men of letters met for a *p'tit verre* or a glass of coffee at a boulevard café, a question was often asked that had no answer but a shrug—what in heaven's name had become of Arthur Rimbaud, the poet? The older men remembered him well, this overgrown, unmannerly whelp of eighteen who had suddenly appeared among them from some dull town in the Ardennes, and had made his way into the literary heart of things; they remembered the sensation which had followed Verlaine's publication of his poetry.

What liberties the boy had taken with the spirit and the forms of verse; the young wipe-nose-on-his-sleeve had disordered the whole world of poetry with his free rhymes, his poems in prose, his prose in poems, and his raving sonnets on the colours of vowels. "I accustomed myself," he had said, "to direct hallucination, and managed quite easily to see a mosque where stood a factory, a school of drums kept by angels, wagons on the roads of heaven, a drawing room at the bottom of a lake; monsters and mysteries, a whole vaudeville, in fact, lifted heads of terror before me." He had written of a day in spring, "Lying sprawled in the valley one feels that the earth is nuptial and overbrims with blood." A strange eighteen-year-old! Some remembered the boy in his square-cut, double-breasted jacket of the seventies, his little, flat, pancake hat, pipe, and long, womanish hair hiding the back of his collar and touching his shoulders.

And now the younger generation were reading him with enthusiasm, copying his mood and manner, and annoying their elders with questions about him. Tell us of Arthur Rimbaud. Is he still alive? Did he ever actually exist? Is he simply a ghost whose name Verlaine has chosen as a pseudonym?

"Dead crazy, or king of a desert island," said the bookish Vanier to a young student stirred by the reading of Rimbaud's *Illuminations*. "On several occasions there have been rumors of his death," said Paul Verlaine.

“We can not confirm the news, and would be saddened by finding it the truth.”



ARTHUR RIMBAUD

What had become of the runaway boy from the Ardennes, the boy with the sulky mouth and hostile, insolent, and splendid eyes, the boy who ran

away from home to live like a strolling ragamuffin, cheeked his elders, wrote astounding verses, and first made use of the new and alarming freedoms of modern poetry?

Had an angel suddenly descended to the boulevards of Paris, grasped a meditating literary nabob by the hair, and whisked him from his marble table and his café au lait to the burning beach of French Somaliland, the man of letters would have found a trader adding up the wriggling figures of a French account. There would not have been a book about to suggest literature; the trader was not interested in literature,—a silly business; he was interested in figures and trade like any sensible Frenchman with his life to gain. Figures, snaky French fives and sevens written down in purple ink under the Somali sun, notes about coffee and hides and firearms. The trader was M. Arthur Rimbaud. Had the nabob rushed to tell him that all young Paris was buzzing with his name, he probably would have been greeted with a rather unpleasant laugh.

No account exists in English of the mysterious last years of Rimbaud turned vagabond and African trader, for the material is difficult to assemble, and the tale has to be pieced out from notes in stray letters, reports of the Colonial office, and even the proceedings of British learned societies. Moreover, there exists no study of the purely vagabond side of his unique career.

Arthur Rimbaud was born in Charleville in French Flanders on October 20th, 1854. It is a dull industrial town in a dull region given over to a Victorian industrialism of weeds, rust, broken windows, and little brick workshops, an industrialism without any dignity of power.

His father, an army officer, having a roving disposition, and his mother “an authoritative air,” they agreed to separate, and the boy was brought up by the mother. The family was not rich exactly, yet was comfortably off in the careful French way; there were brothers and sisters for Arthur to grow up with, and things went well enough till Arthur’s fifteenth year. Then came to pass in that plain bourgeois house a situation quite without a parallel. Arthur, having grown into a lank, gawky, sulky boy with large hands and a provincial twang to his speech, began to develop into a genius with the ripened intellect of an adult, and this sulky child with the amazing grown-up mind remained subject to the purse strings and parental direction of a

common-place, ill-educated, middle-aged woman who lacked acuteness of mind to see the change.

Much has been written of Mme. Rimbaud's "domination" of the prodigy, and its effect on the boy's mind. Yet the mother does not appear to have been unduly harsh or unfeeling; she simply was incapable of understanding the mind of her son. Moreover, she was not without that sense of terror and exasperation which consumes parents who find the children of their flesh developing alien minds and alien ways.

From so grotesque and abnormal a situation, the boy on whom genius had descended, escaped by running away. He accompanied his mother and sisters for a walk, pretended to wish to go home to get a book, and disappeared.

This first vagabondage, undertaken in the disordered war-year of 1870, landed him in the jail for strays and political suspects at Mazas. His one understanding friend, the young schoolmaster Izambard, then rescued him, and sent him back to his mother. Mme. Rimbaud was naturally quite upset. "I fear the little fool will get himself arrested a second time," she wrote to Izambard; "he need never then return, for I swear that never in my life should I ever receive him again. How is it possible to understand the foolishness of the child, he who is so good and quiet ordinarily?"

She did not want her Arthur to be a vagabond. The word has a far different connotation in French than it has in English. In English, it has acquired something of a poetic flavour; in French it is still decidedly a term of reproach. The French, who plan their lives and their children's lives with a minuteness Englishmen and Americans can never understand, see nothing romantic in a high road wanderer without a definite place in life or a definite goal. The sense of the definite goal is keen in France.

Imagine, then, the anger and despair of Mme. Rimbaud, good Frenchwoman that she was, when her sixteen-year-old genius took to sleeping in barns and following the road. She felt the same way about it an English mother might feel about a son's inclination to take spoons. There is still another element in the relation of Arthur and his mother which escapes the English or American student of Rimbaud's life, and that is the supreme place of the parent in the hierarchy of the French family. Arthur's escapades were a blow to Mme. Rimbaud's authority and prestige; in the eyes of the

French neighbourhood Arthur's vagabondage shamed the mother as well as the son.

After his first return, the boy endured the old, impossible situation for a week, and then fled once more from Charleville. Brussels sees him, and Paris, a boy with worn, dusty clothes staring into the windows of bookshops. At Paris he joined the Communist army for a while. Having been given no uniform, he escaped the general massacre of the insurrectionary troops, and went eastward over the road to Rheims and Château-Thierry. He had no money, but he had youth, his dreams, and a colossal impudence. On occasion he would invade houses while the owners were away in the fields, and go to bed in the best bed. The manoeuvre was not always as successful as the boy might have hoped.

There rises before the mind's eye a picture of the gawky, impudent, runaway stripling with the insolent eyes trudging the white roads of France with their fine, sharp surface dust and underbody hard and relentless as a ribbon of solid stone; one sees him pass the haycocks in the fields, the yellow-green of river meadows, the opaque, greenish streams, the poplars, and village chimneys curling up wood smoke into the rosy, humid dawn.

The boy enjoyed the bohemian adventure, and found a place in his mind for its sordid side.

Through 1870 and most of 1871 he comes and goes; he writes, he sulks, he listens to impressive lectures about the heavy necessity of beginning to think of a profession or a career. Arthur, sulkily imprisoned in his abominated Charleville,—“my native town leads in imbecility among small provincial towns”—had a horror of dull labour. He saw too much of it about him. “Masters and workmen, yokels all of them, all ignoble. The hand with the pen is worth the hand with the plough. What a century of hands!” Said Verlaine, “He had a high disdain for whatever he did not wish to do or be.”

Presently comes the great change and the first real opportunity. He sends a sheaf of poems to Paul Verlaine, and Verlaine replies inviting him to be his guest in Paris.

From an abnormal situation the boy thus advanced to an absurd one. The Verlaines were poor, and the poet and his seventeen-year-old wife were living with the wife's parents in order to save money. They may have been

prepared for the coming of a young man, even a very young man, but this gawky, queer, unmanageable seventeen-year-old boy...! It is clear that he soon came to be regarded as an inconvenient intruder by the practical ladies of the poet's family.

In spite of his difficulties, many of his own making, the year 1871-'72 was Rimbaud's great year. He perfected his theory that the maker of poetry should be a *seer*, and practise "the long, immense, and reasoned disordering of the senses," and give to the world "the supreme exaltation arrived at through things unheard of and unnameable." The Parisian literary world, not knowing what to make of art so disorderly and personal, Rimbaud took his familiar refuge in rudeness. A consciousness of his genius strengthened the wings of his pride. In odds and ends of time, in order to gain a little money, he hawked key rings under the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli. Paris beginning to bore him, he actually returned for a little time to Charleville.

While Rimbaud was at Charleville, Verlaine, beset by family troubles, wrote to him begging him to join him in a vagabond tour. Rimbaud, whose consciousness was melting in the flame of hallucinations and poetic ecstasies, accepted at once, and in July, 1872, the two poets set off together. "I sought the sea, as if it were to cleanse me from a stain," wrote Rimbaud. A curious pair and a curious pilgrimage. One has a glimpse of mean lodgings, gutters, roadsides, empty pockets, visions, exaltations, absinthe, dirt and debt. From Belgium, they went to England, where each gathered a few pence teaching French. Returning to Brussels in July, 1873, Verlaine, while in some kind of mental state best studied by psychopathologists, shot his fellow poet in the wrist with a pistol, and was promptly imprisoned by the Belgian authorities. The wound was not serious.

Mme. Rimbaud owned a kind of farm and country house at Roche, and later in the same month of July she suddenly saw Arthur coming towards the gate with his arm in a sling. Now comes a problem to be answered by those who study genius; Rimbaud ceased writing poetry forever. The verse which was to stir France and mould a world style was thus the work of a boy in his eighteenth year. What had taken place? Had his capricious genius flown away to another bough? Had his poetry of visions and hallucinations begun to uncover mysteries beyond the power of the human spirit to endure? Had some intense satisfaction he had known in the composition of poetry begun to fade?

Such is the tale of Arthur Rimbaud's bizarre career as a poet. Is it a wonder that the younger generation wished to know what had become of the man?

II

The poet having ceased to write poetry, a vast part of the house of the brain now lay dark and tenantless, its emptiness accentuated by a memory of the lost spirit whose poetic vitality had once filled the mansion. A wildness of wandering now seized the boy; he was trying to fill the haunted, echoing rooms as best he could, and like the king in the parable, he sought his guests on the roads. He goes to Stuttgart to study German; he crosses the St. Gothard pass on foot and visits Italy; he pays his lodging with casual labor as he goes. And always searching, searching, searching with growing exasperation in his tone.

Then Charleville, and a winter picking up Arabian and Russian,—he is trying to house the intellect in a room once inhabited by something of the very essence of the spirit,—then a journey through Belgium and Holland, and a meeting with a Dutch recruiting sergeant who persuaded him to join the Dutch colonial army. On May 19th, 1876, he signs an engagement for six years, receives 600 francs as a gratuity, sails for Java, disembarks at Batavia, serves for three weeks, deserts, and returns to Europe on an English ship.

Returning to Charleville, he remained there but a short time, and then hurried to Cologne. A strange new guest had arrived unsought in his mind's house, the money-saving instinct, for it is deeper than reason, of the provident French mind. Its first manifestation was not exactly a sympathetic one; in fact, the poet's part in it has a sniff of the bounder, Latin style. Envy of the easy commissions of the sergeant who had enlisted him, this deserter so loudly sang the praises of the Dutch Colonial army that he induced a dozen young Germans to accompany him to Holland and enlist. Rimbaud then pocketed the enlistment commission, and escaped to Hamburg.

At Hamburg a circus is in need of an interpreter, and the sometime poet of hallucinations is given the post. With the circus he goes to Copenhagen, and then flies from it to Stockholm.

The winter of '78 and '79 found him in the isle of Cyprus as foreman of a quarry. The work proved unhealthy, Rimbaud caught typhoid, and in the summer of 1879 he wandered home to recover. His friend Delahaye, finding him at the farm of Roche, ventured to ask him if he still had an interest in literature. Rimbaud shook his head with a smile, as if his thoughts had suddenly turned to something childish, and answered quietly, "I no longer concern myself with it."

In the spring of 1880, the poet being then twenty-six years old, he returned to Africa and the East, there to spend his last eleven years.

In August, 1880, he was at Aden on the Red Sea, as an employee of the French trading house of Mazaran, Viannay and Bardey. The town is one of the most singular and utterly terrible places of the earth.

"You could never come to imagine the place," wrote Rimbaud. "There is not a single tree, not even a shrivelled one, not a single blade of grass, not a rod of earth, not a drop of fresh water. Aden lies in the crater of an extinct volcano which the sea has filled with sand. One sees and touches only lava and sand incapable of sustaining the tiniest spear of vegetation. The surrounding country is an arid desolation of sand. The sides of the crater prevent the entry of any wind, and we bake at the bottom of the hole as if in a lime kiln. One must be indeed a victim of circumstance to seek employment in such hells!"

The house by which Rimbaud was employed traded in Abyssinian ivory, musk, coffee, and gold, and their Abyssinian station was at Harrar. Rimbaud having developed a marvellous facility for native languages, he was presently put in charge of the Abyssinian branch. Harrar stood on an elevation, and the climate was fair enough, though in the spring rains it was often damp and cold. The poet wandered about fearlessly, buying gums and ostrich plumes. It was a busy, confused, uncertain career, and Rimbaud wrote of it with a snarl. Here he was, buried in a world of natives, and "obliged to talk their gibberish languages, to eat their filthy dishes, and undergo a thousand worries rising from their laziness, their treachery, and their stupidity. And this is not the worst of it; there is the fear of becoming animalized oneself, isolated as remote as one is from all intellectual companionship."

The month of July, 1884, saw the house of Mazaran, Viannay and Bardey vanish from the scene, and emerge as the property of Bardey. In October, 1885, the poet's contract with this new Maison Bardey expired, and he refused to renew it after a "violent scene." He had spent five years as a trading agent in Arabia and Abyssinia; he knew the country and its languages as did no other European, and he thought it time to go into business for himself. At Aden dwelt another French agent, one Pierre Labutut, and with this man Rimbaud presently founded a new company.

Old Menelik of Abyssinia wanted guns; he paid fancy prices for rifles, and Rimbaud and Labutut determined to run in rifles on a grand scale. They would secure rifles of a disused model in Europe, ship them to Aden, transfer them to a caravan gathered at Tadjourah on the Somali coast, and then take them to Choa, and sell them to Menelik. At Liége in Belgium or at French military depots, old rifles might be had at seven or eight francs apiece; they would sell them to Menelik for forty francs and the freight.

It was a difficult and complicated task. There were a thousand things to be thought of—provisions, salaries, camel hire, extortions, tips, taxes, impositions, buying and maintenance. The caravan would have to spend fifty days in a "desert country" among unfriendly tribes.

"The natives along the caravan route are Dankalis," said Rimbaud; "they are Bedouin shepherds and Moslem fanatics and they are to be feared. It is true that we are armed with rifles while the Bedouins have only lances. Nevertheless, all caravans are attacked."

A difficulty with the French foreign office over the matter of gun running now intervened, and then came a serious blow. Labutut died, deeply in debt, and leaving the weight of the whole complicated enterprise on Rimbaud's shoulders. In spite of these checks, however, the poet went ahead with his scheme and led his caravan to Choa.

The caravan arrived, but the scheme was a failure. "My venture has taken the wrong turn," wrote Arthur to Bardey. The huge expenses had not only eaten up all the expected profits, but had even consumed the little sum Arthur had managed to amass in the previous years. Yet he paid all Labutut's debts and gave a sum to his partner's young son. "His very generous and discreet charity," said Bardey, "was probably one of the very few things he did without snarling or shrill complaints."

Then to Cairo with what money he has in a money belt about him. He “cannot” return to Europe because he would certainly die in the cold winter, he is too accustomed to a “wandering, free and open life” and because he has “no position.” That French touch at the end! Presently he re-establishes himself at Harrar, and manages to gain a modest living. One sees him at his little trading station cautiously receiving small shipments of rifles, weighing coffee in scales, and estimating the worth of his ivory,—a lean, sun-browned French trader in his early thirties. In 1889 he received a letter which must have put a strange look on his face. It was from a Parisian journalist.

“Sir,” it ran, “living so far away from us, you are doubtless unaware that in a very small group at Paris, you have become a legendary personage. Literary reviews of the Latin quarter have published you, and your first efforts have even been gathered into a book.”

In 1891 an infection of the knee obliged him to return to Europe, an operation failed to check the malady, and in November he found that timelessness which he once pictured as “the sea fled with the sun.”

As a personage, Rimbaud remains the most mysterious of all vagabonds. The ceaseless, embittered, eager search for something that was his life,—what shall be its last interpretation? Did he seek something which had fled him, or something to replace the thing which had fled? From the Latin quarter of the 80’s, with its book shops, its old dank houses, and drizzling rain of the cloudy Parisian spring to the lifeless oven of Aden, his mind had known but one aim, and that an aim unlike any other sought by the great vagabonds. No answer may be found by scanning the poetry, for Rimbaud the poet and Rimbaud the Somali trader were two men. Active, nervous, intellectual, difficult and often utterly unpleasant and unsympathetic, he wanders about his bales of goods in the warehouse shadows, a mysterious and intriguing figure. After all, though he did not find the answer he sought—who does?—he found activity, and for him activity was the soul’s rest.

Transcriber's Note: [click here](#) to see the book’s illustrated endpaper.



FOOTNOTES

[1] Nootka Sound, Vancouver Island.

[2] A type of Russian carriage.

[3] Tip money.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BOOK OF
GALLANT VAGABONDS ***

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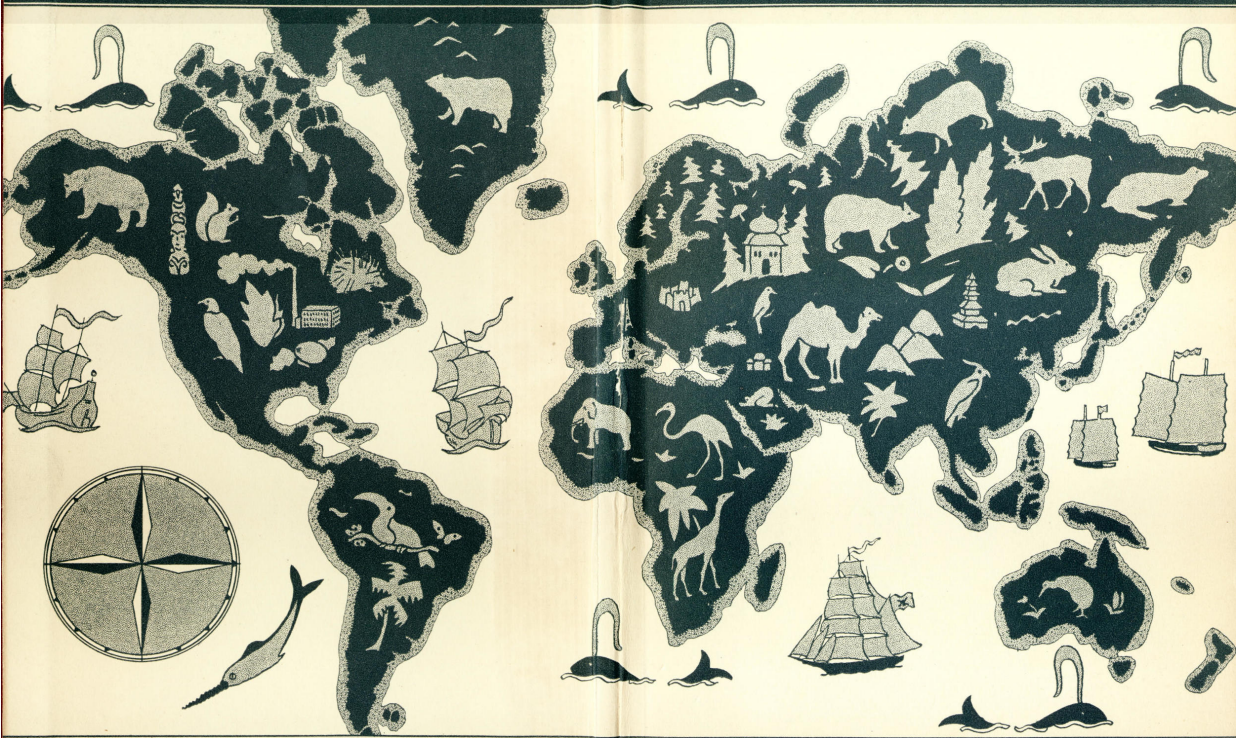
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